

Stafford Middle School

2009-2010

8th Grade

COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

Required Courses

English (Full Year):

Instruction in grammar, composition and spelling in the eighth grade language arts program is intended to help students communicate more accurately and effectively by strengthening both oral and written language skills. Students will use the study of classic and contemporary novels as a springboard for writing. All students will study a variety of research techniques and complete a formal paper.

Pre-Advanced Placement English (Full Year):

Pre AP English provides qualified students with skills 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 recommendation. Please be sure to read the Pre AP Guidelines found at the back of this catalog.

Literature: (Full Year):

Through this literature based reading program, students will strengthen previously learned skills while coming to appreciate and recognize a number of types and styles of literature. A variety of authors and genres will be covered during the year.

Gifted and Talented Literature and English (Full Year):

Eighth grade students who are currently identified in the Frisco ISD Gifted and Talented program (Quest) will be guided through a challenging course that will expose them to various literary genres. 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.

Math (Full Year):

Introduction to Algebra will involve study in 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 the conversion of US customary and metric systems of measurement. This challenging class will prepare students for Algebra I.

Algebra I (Full Year)*:

Algebra I will include the following concepts: operations with real numbers and properties of real numbers, linear equations and inequalities with one variable, linear equations and inequalities with two variables, skills associated with polynomials and rational expressions, properties of roots and operations with radicals and quadratic equations. Student admission will be based on previous academic performance and standardized test scores. A student in 7th Grade Pre-AP Math should have 2 of the 3 in place to be considered ready for Algebra 1 in 8th grade: TAKS scale score for grade 7 > 2280* or raw score > 40 (85%); raw score performance on IAAT > 49; final average Math grade in 7th grade Pre AP > 88. If a student was in 7th grade Math (not Pre-AP) immediately prior and is requesting Algebra 1 in 8th grade, the following must be included in addition to the above requirements. (Note – this is so that the district has documentation that the child has earned mastery of the 8th grade TEKS without the benefit of instruction and remain in compliance with the legal requirements of providing instruction in all the TEKS): score of 90% on both parts to a Credit-by-exam for grade 8, final average math grade in 7th grade regular math > 92%.

Students will **not** be enrolled in this course unless they meet **all requirements**.

Students must maintain an average of 80 or above for each marking period in order to remain in Algebra I. Upon successful completion of the class, students will receive one of the four math credits required for high school graduation. Students who elect to take this high school level course designed to prepare students for an advanced math program should expect high standards and an additional time requirement. Students may **not** retake Algebra I for credit at the high school level.

Science (Full Year):

Eighth grade science builds on the concepts that begin in seventh grade science. Additional topics such as geology and meteorology are introduced. The interdependence of the sciences is stressed and analyzed throughout the year.

Pre-Advanced Placement Science (Full Year):

Pre AP Science provides qualified students with skills 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.

US History (Full Year):

This American History course provides meaningful learning experiences that will promote a better understanding and appreciation of American democracy and the American way of life. The content of this course deals with the United States from its origin through the Civil War/Reconstruction. This course provides students the opportunity to investigate and to inquire, to analyze and to evaluate, to make decisions and to challenge opposing views, and thus prepares the student for future participation in the American democratic process. Geography will be included, pointing out physical aspects of the US and other countries, thereby enhancing an awareness of the world.

Elective Courses

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 CANNOT have reached their 15th birthday prior to September 1st of the current school year.

Tennis

The Tennis program is designed to help students acquire and improve the skills needed for competitive tennis.

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 2nd semester. All players not chosen for the intermediate class will be placed in a PE class the 2nd 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.

Intermediate Tennis (One Semester) will consist of athletes who have demonstrated the skill level of a potential intermediate player in the beginning basics. The top 15 – 20 students will advance to the Intermediate class for the 2nd semester based on the coaches' evaluations during the 1st semester Beginning Tennis class.

Advanced class (Full Year) will consist of a more diligent, higher skill level workout, focusing on competitive play. The athlete needs to be completely dedicated to a full year of tennis workouts and elevated ambitions. They should also be constantly broadening their skill level not only through school tennis but also outside competitions and lessons. Advanced athletes need to be able to demonstrate a forehand, backhand, volley and a serve or be a very versatile athlete setting themselves apart as far as coordination, anticipation and agility.

The advanced players are chosen by the tennis coach the previous spring during a tryout. The basic guide in choosing these advanced players is experience level. Any player not chosen for the advanced class will be placed in beginning tennis.

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.

Art II (Full Year):

Teacher approval is required for students to take Art II. Students must have completed a Art I to take Art II. Art II will expand on the principles and elements of Art I, while spending more time on art history and techniques of drawing and painting. The focus for the first semester will be two-dimensional work and design; second semester will include ceramics, printmaking, sculpture and weaving.

Art III (Full Year):

Teacher approval is required for students to take Art III. Art III will follow the general outline of Art II except that difference projects will be assigned and different artists will be studied. Also, perspective drawing and art criticism will be taught in depth. Higher order thinking skills will be emphasized. Students need to be mature with the ability to work independently.

Theater

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.

Theatre Arts II (Full Year):

Theatre Arts I is a prerequisite for Theatre Arts II. Theatre Arts II builds upon the skills learned in Theatre Arts I. Students will continue to strengthen their acting skills in a variety of theatrical experiences including reading and writing plays, as well as memorized and improvisational performance.

Theatre Arts III (Full Year):

Teacher approval is required for students to take Theatre Arts III. Theatre Arts III builds upon the skills learned in Theatre Arts II. Students will continue to strengthen their acting skills in a variety of theatrical experiences including reading and writing plays, as well as memorized and improvisational performance. Higher order thinking skills will be emphasized. Technical theatre will be involved. Students need to be mature with the ability to work independently.

Band

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.

Orchestra

Beginning Orchestra (Full Year):

Beginning Strings is open to all 6th, 7th or 8th 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 7th 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. Intermediate Orchestra will combine on two or more occasions with other performing groups to present concerts for the parents and the public, as well as 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 8th 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 7th or 8th 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 auditioned choir, open to 7th and 8th 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.

Spanish 1B (Full Year)*:

Students must have successfully completed Spanish 1A in 7th grade to enroll in Spanish 1B. Student success in core classes is essential to the acquisition of a foreign language. Spanish 1B continues with the development of the four basic language skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing through the use of oral drills, vocabulary building, simple composition and reading assignments, dialogue and creative writing. The course also stresses cultural awareness and 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(7th grade) and Spanish IB(8th 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 would like a general overview of both multimedia and video production.

Multimedia II (One Semester) and Video Production II (One Semester):

Students will utilize basic video editing concepts learned in entry level Video Production and Multimedia. Students will learn higher level video editing with Final Cut Express. Projects will include music videos, documentaries, silent films, morphing, and flashbacks. Projects will be integrated with Multimedia applications to encompass all aspects of still and video photography editing. Higher level movie editing techniques and multimedia curriculum will be used. Students will enhance their skills with the Mac & PC computer and video equipment; enhance their understanding of camera presence, and script writing.

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.

Broadcast (Full Year): APPLICATION REQUIRED

Students must apply for admission to this course. Successful completion of Video Production I and Multimedia I are prerequisites for Broadcast. Using the software applications Adobe Photoshop Elements and Final Cut Express, students will learn how to integrate digital graphics with video segments to create their projects. Students will be responsible for producing the FLY-TV broadcast as well as completing independent projects. Higher level movie editing techniques and multimedia curriculum will be used. Students will enhance their skills with the Mac computer and video equipment; enhance their understanding of good journalism techniques such as interviewing, camera presence, and script writing.

Digital Graphics and Animation (Full Year):

Animation is a course designed for students to investigate and increase their understanding of creating digital graphics and animation. Using Animation Master, a state of the art modeling, animation and rendering software, students will learn basic animation and design techniques and terminology. **Prerequisite: In order to sign up for Animation, a student must have taken either a semester of Video Production or a semester of Multimedia in the previous school year.**

Keyboarding (One Semester) / Technology Applications (One Semester)

Keyboarding (One Semester)

Students will learn the “touch keyboarding skill” and the proper formatting of documents for personal and business use. There will be opportunities for students to apply their keyboarding skills in “real life” situations. Students will be helped to achieve their potential in speed and accuracy. While not a mandatory requirement for advanced computer and business classes, keyboarding provides essential skills for success in these areas.

Technology Applications (One Semester)

By using technology as a tool that supports the work of individuals and groups in solving problems, students will select the technology appropriate for the task, synthesize knowledge, create a solution, and evaluate the results. Students communicate information in different formats and to diverse audiences. A variety of technologies will be used with emphasis on the Microsoft Office Suite of Software. Students will analyze and evaluate the results.

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.

Health Education (Full Year)*:

Health Education stresses concepts and skills that foster individual personal health and safety, health-related concepts and skills that invoke interaction between individuals and health-related concepts and skills that affect the well-being of people collectively. Following successful completion of this course, high school credit will be awarded as the one-semester health requirement.

Yearbook (Full Year): APPLICATION REQUIRED

Students must apply for admission to this course. Students enrolling in Journalism should exhibit a high degree of responsibility, tenacity and maturity. As a part of the curriculum, students will be required to attend and cover events before and after school. A strong English and/or Art background will be helpful as this course involves production of the school yearbook. This course teaches basic journalism and printing terms, layout designs and copy preparation.

Teen Leadership(Full Year):

This course offers a leadership development curriculum designed to provide young people with essential life skills. It is a dynamic experience that empowers teens to be the leaders of tomorrow through highly interactive activities conducted by a specially trained teacher. The class activities revolve around lessons in goal setting, developing relationships, public speaking, skills in affirmation, actions of personal responsibility and conflict resolutions skills.

Student Aide (Full Year): APPLICATION REQUIRED

Students will be assigned to assist in the main office, Counselors’ office, Library, Band or in Learning Lab. An application process will be used in the selection of the students.

* **The State Board of Education and the Commissioner of Education are currently considering changes regarding the calculation for the GPA for the freshman class of 2009 as of print date. These changes have not been finalized. More information will be shared as it becomes available.**

The proposal includes counting grades from high school courses taken in middle school (Algebra, Health, and Spanish) towards the student's overall High School G.P.A. (Grade Point Average)