

**WILLIAMSON COUNTY  
SCHOOLS**

**COURSE DESCRIPTIONS**

**FOR MIDDLE SCHOOLS**

**GRADES 6-8**

**2023-2024**



## **COURSE DESCRIPTIONS BY SUBJECT AREA**

- **Language Arts**
- **Mathematics**
- **Science**
- **Social Studies**
- **World Language**
- **Fine Arts**
- **Physical Education & Related Arts**

# LANGUAGE ARTS

## **6<sup>th</sup> Grade Language Arts**

Students in 6<sup>th</sup> grade Language Arts will engage in a rigorous curriculum which focuses on the standard areas of reading, writing and communication. Students will read a variety of literary genres such as poetry, novels, short stories, and non-fiction. As a complement to the reading instruction, students will be required to write narrative, informational/explanatory, and argument essays which involve text-based evidence for student responses. Teachers will also scaffold vocabulary and grammar instruction to enhance student effectiveness in reading and writing.

## **7<sup>th</sup> Grade Language Arts**

Students in 7<sup>th</sup> grade Language Arts engage in rigorous application and reinforcement of grammar skills and a variety of writing strategies and techniques. Students compose narrative, informational/explanatory, and argumentative essays in which they support their ideas with evidence from various genres or informational texts. Reading includes novels, short stories, poetry, non-fiction, and informational texts. Students select independent reading books and complete various comprehension and analysis activities based on their books. Continued scaffolding in vocabulary will occur as students employ comprehension strategies to analyze key ideas and details in the wide variety of texts they will read.

## **8<sup>th</sup> Grade Language Arts**

Students in 8<sup>th</sup> grade Language Arts follow standards to develop greater analytical reading and thinking skills that consistently spiral student learning of grade-level skills. Students write narrative informational/explanatory, and argumentative essays, incorporating textual evidence from literary or informational passages. Grammar instruction requires students to embed grammar concepts into writing. Students read a variety of novels, short stories, poetry, and non-fiction. The mission of the 8<sup>th</sup> grade English Language Arts Department is to prepare students for high school expectations which include high proficiency in written expression, grammar, vocabulary acquisition, reading comprehension, effective communications, research skills, and self-discipline.

# MATHEMATICS

## 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Math

**Prerequisites:** Successful completion of 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Math

Mathematical concepts and skills from the following five domains will be explored throughout the 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Math course. **The Number System:** Use real number operations to solve problems; extend full understanding and ordering of numbers to include integers, absolute value, and location of points in all four quadrants of the coordinate plane. **Ratios and Proportional Relationships:** Formal study of ratios and proportions. **Expressions and Equations:** Use variable expressions and equations to represent written situations; solve one-step equations. **Geometry:** Build on and extend their understanding of area and volume to solve problems. **Statistics and Probability:** Formally develop statistical thinking; analyze data to identify its center, spread and shape.

## 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Math

**Prerequisites:** Successful completion of 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Math

Mathematical concepts and skills from the following five domains will be explored throughout the 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Math course. **The Number System:** Students extend number operations to all rational numbers, including negative numbers. **Ratios and Proportional Relationships:** Develop an understanding of proportionality to solve single and multi-step problems, including percent problems; identify the constant rate of change. **Expressions and Equations:** Apply properties of operations to solve problems using expressions and equations, extending to 2-step equations. **Geometry:** Area, Surface Area and Volume; Circumference of a circle; use scale drawings and informal geometric constructions; **Statistics and Probability:** Draw inferences about a population through sampling; use measures of center and variability; develop, use, and evaluate probability models.

## 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Math

**Prerequisites:** Successful completion of 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Math

Mathematical concepts and skills from the following five domains will be explored throughout the 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Math course. **The Number System:** Extend the number system to include irrational numbers; approximate irrational numbers. **Expressions and Equations:** Work with radicals and integer exponents; Make connections between proportional relationships, lines, and linear equations; Solve system of 2 linear equations; **Functions:** Begin formal study of functions; translate among representations of functions. **Geometry:** Use ideas about distance and angles and their behavior under transformations; learn and apply the Pythagorean Theorem to find distances, lengths, and analyze polygons; Volume of Cone, Cylinder, and Sphere. **Statistics and Probability:** Work with scatter plots for bivariate data; Use linear models to solve problems interpreting the slope and intercept; continue work with probability to compound events; represent data using multiple formats.

## Accelerated Math Courses

All middle schools offer accelerated math courses. Acceleration is recommended for students based on several data points considered by the school math placement team. Data considered for acceleration may include but is not limited to WCS Math Placement test score, STAR Math percentile Ranks, and TCAP Math data.

Blended courses cover more than one year's worth of 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and/or 8th-grade content. Standards are compact, making the course fast paced and rigorous. Students who successfully complete the compacted course(s) and show mastery of the standards covered may take one or two high school math courses in middle school. All middle schools offer Honors Algebra 1, but not all offer Honors Geometry on the middle school campus.

## Algebra 1 Honors

**Prerequisites:** Data considered for Algebra 1 placement in middle school may include but is not limited to WCS Math Placement test score, STAR Math Percentile Ranks, and TCAP Math data.

This course includes properties of the real number system, linear and quadratic systems, inequalities, operations on real numbers and polynomials, exponents, and radicals. Students learn the language of algebra and practice the application of algebraic concepts to real-world problems. The Mathematical

Practice Standards apply throughout this course and, together with the content standards, prescribe that student experience mathematics as a coherent, useful, and logical subject that makes use of their ability to make sense of problem situations.

Honors Algebra I is covered in greater depth and at a faster pace, providing time for enrichment through the study of additional performance objectives. As part of the requirement for this honor's level course, students must complete rigorous assignments which may include complex problem-solving, research that involves reading/writing assignments, investigations and explorations, advanced use of technology, and making connections within the discipline and to the workplace. **Minimum Credit: 1.0 Maximum Credit: 1.0 NCAA Approved: Yes**

## **Geometry Honors**

**Prerequisites:** Successful completion of Algebra 1

This course is a survey of the fundamental and advanced concepts of plane geometry and the related topics in three-dimensional, coordinate, and transformational geometry. The fundamental purpose of the course in Geometry is to formalize and extend students' geometric experiences from the middle grades. Students explore more complex geometric situations and deepen their explanations of geometric relationships, moving towards formal mathematical arguments. The Mathematical Practice Standards apply throughout this course and, together with the content standards, allow students to experience mathematics as a coherent, useful, and logical subject that capitalizes on their ability to make sense of problem situations. Honors Geometry is covered at a significantly faster pace, in greater depth, and with supplemental topics. Strong analytical thinking skills beyond the rigors of algebraic computation are essential for this course, which strongly emphasizes the concept of proof. As part of the requirement for this honor's level course, students must complete rigorous assignments which may include complex problem-solving, research that involves reading/writing assignments, investigations and explorations, advanced use of technology and making connections within the discipline and to the workplace.

**Minimum Credit: 1.0 Maximum Credit: 1.0 NCAA Approved: Yes**

**Algebra 1 and Geometry are high school courses. If these courses are taken in middle school, the final grade will be calculated into the high school GPA and reflected on the high school transcript. Students are still required to enroll in a math course each year of high school beyond the math credits earned in middle school. Algebra 1 and/or Geometry may not be repeated for credit in high school once the credit is earned in middle school.**

# **SCIENCE**

## **6<sup>th</sup> Grade Science**

The theme of energy guides the 6th grade science focus. Students will begin their science curriculum by examining potential and kinetic energy. Investigations of gravitational, elastic, and electric potential energy will provide students with an understanding of how energy can be stored in different systems. They will continue to explore kinetic energy, as well as thermal energy in the form of conduction, convection, and radiation throughout the atmosphere and oceans. This transfer of energy, along with investigating atmospheric currents, will comprise the majority of the Earth's processes curriculum. Students will relate the flows of energy with weather and climate by investigating major weather occurrences. The theme of energy systems continues as students investigate the transfer of energy through populations and ecosystems. They will study how ecosystems change over time from natural causes and human impact.

## **7<sup>th</sup> Grade Science**

The theme of matter, both non-living and living, guides 7th grade science studies. This class will introduce students to the foundations of chemistry as they gain an understanding of atoms, properties of matter, the periodic table, chemical reactions, and the law of conservation of mass. Focus then shifts from chemistry to biology, where students will apply their chemical knowledge to the living world. This includes understanding how molecules combine to make cell structures and interact to maintain homeostasis through various cell functions such as cellular diffusion, respiration, and reproduction. Students will apply their knowledge of cell structure and function to higher levels of the organism where they will study organ systems through dissections of vertebrate specimens. Finally, students will investigate asexual and sexual reproduction and how genetics contributes to the survival of the species.

## **8<sup>th</sup> Grade Science**

The theme of force and motion comprises the backbone of 8th-grade science. This year begins with student analysis of the motion of objects and the forces behind that motion. Foundational knowledge will be applied to understanding the relationship between electricity and magnetism and how that relationship is used in everyday technologies. Students will further explore how waves transfer energy and are an integral aspect of today's communication tools. Force and motion continue to be explored through the expansion of the universe, along with gravity's role in the formation and motion of celestial objects. An in-depth study will be done on Earth's plate tectonics including plate movements, rock formation, the occurrence of earthquakes, and the formation of major geological features. Students will end the course by examining Earth's fossil record to identify how species have changed, adapted, and survived through the process of natural selection.

## **SOCIAL STUDIES**

### **6<sup>th</sup> Grade Social Studies**

Students study the beginning of early civilizations through the fall of the Roman Empire. The emphasis is on the shift from nomadic societies to agricultural societies; an analysis of the geographical, social, cultural, economic, and political foundations of early civilizations; an analysis of the chronological development of Mesopotamia, Egypt, India, China, Ancient Israel, Greece, and Rome; and the impact of geography, early history, cultural development, and economic change in the ancient world. The geographic concentration includes the study of physical and political features, economic development and resources, and migration patterns. This course is the first concentrated study of world history and geography and utilizes appropriate excerpts of informational texts and primary sources.

### **7<sup>th</sup> Grade Social Studies**

Students explore the social, cultural, geographical, political, and technological changes that occurred after the fall of the Roman Empire and in Medieval Europe. The study also consists of the later periods of the new cultures and civilizations that developed in the Middle East, Africa, China, and Japan, but with a heavier emphasis on western civilization in Europe during the Renaissance and Reformation. The focus covers the comparison of the history and geography of civilizations concurrently developing throughout these continents; examination of the growth in economic interactions among civilizations as well as the exchange of ideas, beliefs, technologies, and commodities; the resulting spread of Enlightenment philosophies and the examination of new concepts of reasoning toward religion, government, and science that continue to influence our world today. An analysis of geography's influence on the development of these civilizations is a key aspect. Students conclude their learning by examining the Meso-American and Andean civilizations, and the age of European explorations. Appropriate informational texts and primary sources are used to deepen the understanding of how these civilizations influence our modern world.

### **8<sup>th</sup> Grade Social Studies**

Students study the European colonization of North America, along with the geographic features that influenced early settlements and colonies. This course emphasizes the development and maturation of the British colonies and the political, cultural, and economic influences that led to the American Revolution. The major events and outcomes of the American Revolution are analyzed, along with the individuals who played influential roles in the development of our nation. The study includes the development of the United States and its government, continuing through the early 19th century, the impact of the expansion of the United States and its implications on domestic and foreign policy and interactions with American Indians. The events leading up to the Civil War are examined, along with the significant individuals and events during the war. The history, people, government, and geography of Tennessee are embedded within the American story to illustrate the role and relevance our state has played in American history. Reconstruction and its impact conclude this course. Appropriate primary sources and informational texts are included to enhance understanding of the content.

# **WORLD LANGUAGE**

## **Spanish I 7A**

In Spanish 7A students will complete the first semester content from the high school level 1 course. Students will develop the ability to communicate about themselves and their immediate environment through the three modes of communication: interpretive, interpersonal, and presentational. Students will recognize and communicate on a few topics using a variety of words and phrases they have practiced and memorized. Students will also explore the similarities and differences between American culture and that of the Spanish-speaking world via the use of authentic resources. Students are expected to perform consistently at the Novice Mid level by the end of the course and will participate in regular performance assessments. One world language high school credit is earned by completing both the Spanish 7A and Spanish 8B courses. A student's final grade for this course will be calculated into the high school GPA and be reflected on the high school transcript.

## **Spanish I 7A Honors**

In Spanish 7A Honors students will complete the first semester content from the high school level 1 course. Students will develop the ability to communicate about themselves and their immediate environment through the three modes of communication: interpretive, interpersonal, and presentational. Students will understand and exchange information about familiar topics using phrases and simple sentences, sometimes supported by memorized language. Students will continue to explore the similarities and differences between American culture and that of the Spanish-speaking world via the use of authentic resources. Students are expected to perform consistently at the Novice High level by the end of the course and will participate in regular performance assessments. One world language high school credit is earned by completing both the Spanish 7A and Spanish 8B courses. A student's final grade for this course will be calculated into the high school GPA and be reflected on the high school transcript.

## **Spanish I 8B**

In Spanish 8B will complete the second semester content from the high school level 1 course. Students will continue to develop the ability to communicate about themselves and their immediate environment through the three modes of communication: interpretive, interpersonal, and presentational. Students will understand and exchange information about familiar topics using phrases and simple sentences, sometimes supported by memorized language. Students will continue to explore the similarities and differences between American culture and that of the Spanish-speaking world via the use of authentic resources. Students are expected to perform consistently at the Novice High level by the end of the course and will participate in regular performance assessments. Students will take Avant's STAMP assessment as part of their final exam score. One world language high school credit is earned by completing both the Spanish 7A and Spanish 8B courses. A student's final grade for this course will be calculated into the high school GPA and be reflected on the high school transcript. Spanish 7A is a pre-requisite for this course.

## **Spanish I 8B Honors**

In Spanish 8B will complete the second semester content from the high school level 1 course. By the end of the course students will express themselves, participate in conversations, and write on several familiar topics using simple sentences through the three modes of communication: interpretive, interpersonal, and presentational. Students will be able to handle brief social interactions in everyday situations by asking and answering simple questions. Students will begin to communicate about themselves, others, and everyday life in familiar situations. ts will continue to explore the similarities and differences between American culture and that of the Spanish-speaking world via the use of authentic resources. Students are expected to perform consistently at the Intermediate Low level by the end of the course and will participate in regular performance assessments. Students will take Avant's STAMP assessment as part of their final exam score. One world language high school credit is earned by completing both the Spanish

7A and Spanish 8B courses. A student's final grade for this course will be calculated into the high school GPA and be reflected on the high school transcript. Spanish 7A is a pre-requisite for this course.

### **Spanish I 8<sup>th</sup> Grade**

Students in 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Spanish I will complete content from both semesters of the high school level 1 course. By the end of the course, students will understand and express themselves in simple conversations on familiar topics using a variety of words, phrases, simple sentences, and questions that have been highly practiced and memorized. Students will be able to handle very brief social interactions in everyday situations by asking and answering simple questions. Students will recognize pieces of information from texts and sometimes understand the main topic of what is read or said. Students will write and present short messages on familiar topics related to everyday life using practiced phrases and simple sentences. Students will explore the similarities and differences between American culture and the culture of the Spanish-speaking world via the use of authentic resources. Students are expected to perform consistently at the Novice High level by the end of the course. Students will take Avant's STAMP assessment as part of their final exam score. One world language high school credit is earned in this course. A student's final grade for this course will be calculated into the high school GPA and be reflected on the high school transcript.

### **Spanish I Honors 8<sup>th</sup> Grade**

Students in 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Spanish I Honors will complete content from both semesters of the high school level 1 course. By the end of the course students will express themselves, participate in conversations, and write on several familiar topics using simple sentences. Students will be able to handle brief social interactions in everyday situations by asking and answering simple questions. Students will begin to communicate about themselves, others, and everyday life in familiar situations. Students will recognize the main idea from texts and understand the main topic of what is read or said regarding familiar topics. Students will explore the similarities and differences between American culture and the culture of the Spanish-speaking world via the use of authentic resources. Students are expected to perform consistently at the Intermediate Low level by the end of the course. Students will participate in regular performance assessments. Students will take Avant's STAMP assessment as part of their final exam score. One world language high school credit is earned in this course. A student's final grade for this course will be calculated into the high school GPA and be reflected on the high school transcript.

## **FINE ARTS**

Each school may have variations of the following fine arts courses.

### **6<sup>th</sup> Grade**

#### **Theatre**

Sixth grade Drama is an introductory course designed to build confidence speaking and performing in front of peers. This class is focused primarily on theatre terminology, basic performance techniques, scriptwriting, and the origins of drama. Students are actively involved in the process of creating and producing skits and scenes. (9-weeks)

#### **Visual Art**

Sixth grade art builds drawing, painting, print-making and sculpting skills. Students also learn to criticize and evaluate art works, created by themselves and other artists, as well as learn and use a basic vocabulary used by artists. (Art may be 9-weeks, semester-long or year-long and varies by school)

#### **General Music**

Students will be introduced to the building blocks of music. Throughout the nine weeks, students will grow their knowledge of music theory and analysis through composition and performance. General music may be taught through an emphasis on choral singing, digital music, guitar, piano, or a combination of these. The course varies by school. (9-weeks)



## **Chorus**

Students will learn proper vocal production techniques, music literacy, and methods of expression that will further their individual musicianship. While students are developing their own vocal abilities, they will be practicing the art of unified music-making in creating balance and blend. We will explore choral literature from varied time periods, styles, and cultures. Students are expected to practice individually in preparation for class and to attend all performances. (Chorus may be 9-weeks, semester-long or year-long and varies by school)

## **Band**

The band program offers instrumental instruction to all interested sixth-grade students. The students begin to learn music notation, ear training, dictation, as well as the basics of their instrument(s). Students will learn the foundations that will ensure their success as future band members such as learning to read music, producing a good tone, assimilating music history and theory; and playing and performing individually and as a group. Students are expected to practice individually in preparation for class and to attend all performances. (Year-long)

## **String Orchestra**

The string orchestra program is open to students who are interested in playing or already play, the violin, viola, cello, or (upright/string) bass. The class will focus on introducing students to the instruments, as well as providing differentiated instruction for students with previous experience. Students with previous experience are encouraged to register for this course to be eligible for additional performance opportunities. Basics of their instrument, music notation, ear training, music history, basic musicianship, as well as teamwork are emphasized. These are the areas that will continue to be developed as a student continues through the strings program. Performances may range up to four per year. (Year-long)

## **7<sup>th</sup> grade**

### **Theatre**

Seventh-grade drama is a course exploring theatre from the perspective of an actor. Throughout the class, students will focus on crafting a character, play analysis, the rehearsal process, scriptwriting, and improvisation. Students will also study theatre as a historical and cultural influence throughout the world. (9-weeks)

### **Visual Art**

Seventh-grade art will investigate elements, principles, 2D (drawing, painting, and graphic design), and 3D (multi-media and sculpture) compositions and works. Student work will be focused on improving compositions and developing techniques. Students also develop a historical awareness and connection to other disciplines, as well as a connection to the students' interest at school, in the community/district, and GlobalART network/community. (Art may be 9-weeks, semester-long or year-long and varies by school)

### **General Music**

Students will be introduced to the building blocks of music. Throughout the nine weeks, students will grow their knowledge of music theory and analysis through composition and performance. General music may be taught through an emphasis on choral singing, digital music, guitar, piano, or a combination of these. The course varies by school. (9- weeks)

## **Chorus**

Students will learn proper vocal production techniques, music literacy, and methods of expression that will further their individual musicianship. While students are developing their own vocal abilities, they will be practicing the art of unified music-making in creating balance and blend. We will explore choral literature from varied time periods, styles, and cultures. Students are expected to practice individually in preparation for class and to attend all performances. (Chorus may be 9-weeks, semester-long or year-long and varies by school)

## **Band**

Seventh-grade band is open to all seventh-grade students with at least one-year prior instrumental experience on the instrument chosen to play. **Special permission must be granted by the director if a student wishes to join the ensemble with no previous experience of the chosen band instrument.**

This class will concentrate on developing tone production, rhythmic proficiency, individual and ensemble intonation, and technical accuracy, as well as preparation and performance of intermediate band literature. Students are expected to practice individually in preparation for class and to attend all performances. Students are encouraged to participate in auditions for solo & ensemble festivals, mid-state band, and all-county band. (Year-long)

## **String Orchestra**

The string program is open to students with at least one-year prior instrumental experience playing the violin, viola, cello, or (string/upright) bass. **Special permission must be granted by the director if a student wishes to join the ensemble with no previous experience of the chosen string instrument.**

The class will focus on refining intonation, developing characteristic tone, rhythmic accuracy, note-reading literacy, ensemble development, and additional musicianship skills. Students are expected to practice individually in preparation for class and to attend all performances. Students are encouraged to participate in auditions for solo & ensemble festivals, mid-state band, and all-county band. (Year-long)

## **8th Grade**

### **Theatre**

Eighth grade drama explores all aspects of drama through the lens of technical theatre. Students will focus on play analysis, improvisation, and theatre history from the perspective of the people that make theatre happen: the designers, directors, technicians, and actors. (Length, of course, varies by school)

### **Visual Art**

Eighth-grade art is for the student who enjoys creative expression and wants to learn more about various media. Students may draw, paint, explore printmaking and sculpting. (Art may be 9-weeks, semester-long or year-long and varies by school)

### **General Music**

Students will be introduced to the building blocks of music. Throughout the nine weeks, students will grow their knowledge of music theory and analysis through composition and performance. General music may be taught through an emphasis on choral singing, digital music, guitar, piano, or a combination of these. The course varies by school. (9- weeks)

### **Chorus**

Students will learn proper vocal production techniques, music literacy, and methods of expression that will further their individual musicianship. While students are developing their own vocal abilities, they will be practicing the art of unified music-making in creating balance and blend. We will explore choral literature from varied time periods, styles, and cultures. Students are expected to practice individually in preparation for class and to attend all performances. (Chorus may be 9-weeks, semester-long or year-long and varies by school)

## **Band**

Eighth-grade band is open to all eighth-grade students with at least two years' prior instrumental experience on the instrument chosen to play in the band. **Special permission must be granted by the director if a student wishes to join the ensemble with no previous experience of the chosen band instrument.** This class will concentrate on advanced tone production, advanced rhythmic proficiency, individual ensemble intonation, and technical accuracy, as well as preparation and performance of intermediate/advanced band literature. Students are expected to practice individually in preparation for class and to attend all performances. Students are encouraged to participate in auditions for solo & ensemble festival, mid-state band, and all-county band. (Year-Long)

## **String Orchestra**

The string program is open to all eighth-grade students with at least two years prior instrumental experience on the instrument chosen to play in band. **Special permission must be granted by the director if a student wishes to join the ensemble with no previous experience of the chosen band instrument.** This class will concentrate on advanced tone production, advanced rhythmic proficiency, individual ensemble intonation, and technical accuracy, as well as preparation and performance of intermediate/advanced orchestra literature. Students are expected to practice individually in preparation for class and to attend all performances. Students are encouraged to participate in auditions for solo & ensemble festival, mid-state band, and all-county band. (Year- Long)

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION (PE)**

The Physical Education program provides each student with the opportunity to participate in a comprehensive program consisting of skill development, lead-up games, team sports, individual sports, and physical fitness activities. The students receive instruction in rules, skills, and strategies associated with the different sports as well as learning experiences involving physical conditioning activities. The students will also have opportunities to become involved in life-long physical activities through individual sports units. The program promotes the spirit of cooperation, leadership, fair play, and friendly competition.

## **RELATED ARTS AND EXPLORATORY COURSES**

Each middle school offers additional enrichment courses which may include but are not limited to the following: Technology, Media Production, additional World Languages, Guitar, Computer Literacy, Global Adventures, Robotics, Digital Music, Zumba, etc. Please contact your child's school for specific course selections.



