

# ELECTIVE CHOICES FOR 8th GRADE

## [PUSD MIDDLE SCHOOL COURSE CATALOG](#)

### WORLD LANGUAGE

**Spanish 1B & French 1B** – The course will cover more advanced grammar, more complex conversational patterns, and simple compositions. Successful completion of two years of Spanish/French at the middle school is the equivalent of one year of high school Spanish/French. Advanced high school placement is based on teacher recommendation. A grade of C+ or higher in 7<sup>th</sup> grade Language Arts is strongly recommended to enroll in this class.

**Additional notes:**

~ Students who successfully complete French/Spanish 1A plus 1B in 7th and 8th grade (minimum C+, but A or B recommended), may go on to take French/Spanish 2 as 9th graders, thus fulfilling 1 year of the World Language requirement for college eligibility (for the California State University (CSU) or University of California (UC) system).

~ There is no World Language requirement for PUSD graduation; however, there is a World Language OR CTE OR Visual/Performing Arts requirement.

~For four year college admission, students will need to take a world language in high school. If taken in eighth grade, level 1A is the first semester and 1B is the second semester.

\* These middle school courses are equivalent to a high school course. It is important to note that these courses will appear as an informational footnote on a student's high school transcript. The footnote will display the letter grade earned, but will not count toward credit for graduation and will not be calculated in a student's high school Grade Point Average (GPA). The course may not be removed from the student's permanent transcript per California Education Code 49066.

### BAND/STRINGS/MUSIC

(Students should choose "Concert Band" or "Strings II" for their course selection, the band teacher will notify the counseling office of final band levels for all band/strings students and counselors will make changes accordingly)

**Symphonic Band** - This class is designed for musicians who have had three to four years playing experience. Emphasis will be on learning advanced musical literature, theory, history, and instrumental techniques. Student placement is determined by the band instructor. There is a performance requirement in this class. Prerequisite: Completion of Concert Band or audition.

**Wind Ensemble (Advanced Symphonic Band)** - This class is designed for musicians who have a minimum of two years of playing experience. Class placement is determined by audition and instructor approval. The audition will include a prepared solo, knowledge of major, arpeggios, rhythm, and sight reading. Knowledge of musical terminology is required. Wind Ensemble is a performance oriented class designed to allow experienced musicians to improve and maximize their capabilities on their given instruments. Students will learn and perform advanced music of symphonic band literature. Performances will include a winter and spring concert and various concert festivals and competitions in which the ensemble is entered. Attendance at all performances is required.

**Jazz Band** - Advanced instrumental techniques, theory, improvisation, and a variety of jazz styles are taught in this select class. Instrumentation is limited to saxophones, trumpets, trombones, and a rhythm section of bass, piano, and drum set. All musicians must demonstrate advanced skills, and participation is determined by auditions held in September. This is a competitive band which meets during "A" period. Participation in performances is part of a student's grade. AUDITIONS REQUIRED.

**Strings II** - This class is designed for musicians who have two or more years playing experience. Emphasis will be on learning advanced musical literature, theory, history, and instrumental techniques. Placement is determined by orchestra instructor. There is a performance requirement in this class.

**String Orchestra (Advanced Strings II)** - This class is designed for musicians who have a minimum of two years of playing experience. Class placement is determined by audition and instructor approval. The audition will include a prepared solo, knowledge of all major minor scales, arpeggios, rhythm, and sight reading. Knowledge of musical terminology is required. String Orchestra is a performance oriented class designed to allow experienced String musicians to improve and maximize their capabilities on their given instruments. Students will learn and perform advanced music of String and Full Orchestra literature. Performances will include a winter and spring concert and various concert festivals and competitions in which the ensemble is entered. Attendance at all performances is required.

**Chorus** - This course is designed to provide experience and training for students who are interested in vocal performance. Emphasis will be on vocal technique, music notation, sight singing, various styles or genres of choral music, and performance etiquette. This is a yearlong class.

## **SEMESTER ELECTIVES**

**Art A 8** – Through informative, narrative lessons and studio production activities, students will further develop the skills for looking at, interpreting, creating, and evaluating works of art. In addition, they are provided opportunities to understand and analytically evaluate the meaning, components, and impact of visual culture in their environment. Students explore several art styles and use a variety of art materials and mediums. Students are encouraged to expand their creativity through drawing, painting, and graphic design. They will further develop their technical knowledge and production skills by developing two-dimensional artworks.

**Art B 8** - Through informative, narrative lessons and studio production activities, students will develop the skills for looking at, interpreting, and creating works of art. In addition, they are provided opportunities to understand and evaluate the meaning, components, and impact of visual culture in their environment. Students explore several art movements and use a variety of art materials and mediums. Students will expand their creative abilities using construction and modeling techniques. They will further develop their technical knowledge and production skills by developing three-dimensional artworks.

**Ceramics 8** - Ceramics is a semester-long course where students explore and learn about the historical background, aesthetic traditions, and artistic properties of ceramics through a variety of studio experiences. Emphasis will be placed on the design elements; line, shape, texture, and color. Focus will be on the hand building techniques; pinch, coil and slabs. Functional as well as sculptural applications will be explored. The student will acquire knowledge of form, volume, and space relationships by construction hand-built and wheel-thrown forms of clay. Various glaze and decoration techniques for finishing work will be introduced in the beginning class.

**Culinary Principles 8** - This course will teach students food and kitchen safety and sanitation, basic cooking and baking skills, as well as introducing students to new foods and techniques. Students will be encouraged to develop leadership skills, and express their creativity through hands-on labs. This course articulates with the Culinary Skills and Baking and Pastry in the high school.

**Sewing and Personal Design 8** - This course will teach students advanced hand-sewing and machine stitching. Students will have room for creativity to select textiles and patterns. An introduction to Interior Design will include creating a color wheel, different room designs, features of rooms creating a diorama of one room as a final project.

**Computer Science Essentials 8** - This course will engage students in a variety of aspects including, but not limited to, the use of computers, Internet, programs and applications based on the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) and Career Technical Education (CTE) Standards. Students will learn computer basics using communication and creativity through a variety of lessons, projects and activities designed to promote learning in the 21st Century. All students should possess strong content mastery, as well as the "Four Cs": critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and creativity. Students will be introduced to other topics in technology and engineering with a focus on project-based learning.

**Digital Art and Media** - This is a combination of the middle school technology and art courses that will expose students to the interconnected nature of Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Math and that will engage students in a variety of aspects. Some of the topics will include, but not be limited to, the use of computers, Internet, hands-on art techniques, programs and applications based on the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) and Career Technical Education (CTE) Standards. Students will learn at an advanced level how to combine art techniques with computer and technology basics using communication and creativity through a variety of lessons, projects and activities designed to promote learning in the 21st Century. All students should possess strong content mastery, as well as the "Five Cs": critical thinking, communication, collaboration, creativity and Common Core. Students will be introduced to other topics in technology, art, design and engineering with a focus on project-based learning.

**Engineering Design and Robotics 8** - Students will participate in a project-based curriculum that introduces various disciplines and concepts of engineering, technology and robotics. The core unit introduces engineering and technology and explores the social, cultural, economic, political and environmental consequences of inventions and innovations. Students learn procedures to use and maintain an engineering notebook and learn the steps involved in the engineering design process including documentation procedures. Measurement concepts and skills including both Standard and Metric units, differentiation between accuracy and precision, the use of precision instruments and contextual practice.

**Mentoring through Agriculture** - This semester-long course will allow middle school students to mentor and support preschool students in the natural outdoor learning environment that stimulates the diversity of the child's learning experience and contributes to their healthy development. Preschool students will experience hands-on learning in Harvest Park's Garden/Greenhouse Lab this includes activities in the areas of Science and Agriculture.

**Speech & Drama 8** - The Drama elective is a semester-long course designed to provide eighth grade students with the instruction and opportunity to improve their public speaking abilities, as well as to develop more confidence in performing a variety of assignments for different audiences. After a brief introduction to the history and terminology of theatre, students will produce, develop, design, and evaluate skits, monologues, pantomimes and improvisations. They will write, develop, memorize and perform each assignment in front of an audience of their peers.

**Teacher's Assistant (TA) (Application Required)** - Eighth grade students have the opportunity to use one semester elective to be a teacher assistant. This program provides students with the opportunity to work as an assistant to a teacher, the library clerk, cafeteria staff, or office staff. There may also be an opportunity to be an elementary school teacher assistant. Teacher assistant selections are made on the basis of the student's academic grades (students may not have any F's), citizenship and faculty recommendations. Students must sign up for an elective, which they may drop if chosen to be a teacher assistant. Students must fill out a separate application form for this program. These forms are available in the counseling office. Students may apply to TA for only one semester of their 8th grade year. Grading for Teacher's Assistant elective is Pass/No Pass (P/NP) and is not computed in the GPA. **8th graders may not take A-period PE in order to have a TA position as an additional elective.**

**Video Games Design & Coding** - This engaging and hands-on course introduces students to the exciting world of game design. Students will explore the theories and principles that make games fun, engaging, and meaningful. From analyzing game mechanics, player motivation, and storytelling to understanding the balance between challenge and reward, students will develop a robust foundation in the art and science of game design.

## **YEAR-LONG CLASSES**

**Advanced Drama** - The VAPA (Visual and Performing Arts) elective is a drama elective that spans both semesters and covers much of what is listed in Speech & Drama (above) but includes a performance. Students must submit an application and may need to audition and/or be interviewed.

**Leadership** - This course is for the highly motivated student who has a real desire to become involved in student activities, student government and school/community service. It is strongly recommended that student body officers choose the semester Leadership class as an elective. Students learn about student government, leadership styles, communication, time management, goal setting, decision-making, self-esteem and life skills. Students develop their own leadership skills through direct participation in planning and organizing a variety of programs. Some examples of these opportunities include: managing the student store, orchestrating school dances, and carrying out student and staff recognition programs. Students have the opportunity to create and implement new activities, continue traditions, foster change and make a difference in their own unique style. Selection is based on student application, interviews and recommendations from teachers and administrators. Parents and students should be aware that the class requires an extensive time commitment outside of class.

**Media Communications** - Students engage in projects from the many areas of media, including broadcasting, graphic design, photography, digital editing, interviewing, and storyboarding. Students are responsible for the production of the daily television program. Some time is required outside of class. Regular school attendance is critical. Video projects include stop motion, documentaries, interviews, and news reporting. Students work as part of a team most of the time but must also be able to work independently.

**Yearbook 8** - The focus of this yearlong class is the production of the school yearbook. The students are responsible for all aspects of the yearbook, including its design, creation, and distribution. Using the latest graphic publications computer technology, including digital photography, students will write the copy, take the photographs, and create the layouts necessary to produce the yearbook. Students need to be able to work both independently and cooperatively with other members of the yearbook staff. Students may need to devote time outside of school hours to meet deadlines. Computer knowledge and/or photography skills are a plus, but not a necessity.