



8th Grade Course Descriptions 2025-2026

All students are required to take Health and Physical Education, but students can choose **one year-long encore course option or two semester-long encore course options.**

Health and Physical Education (*required for all*):

Health and Physical Education is a vital part of a complete education and a required course for all middle school students. In the Health and Physical Education curriculum, all students will increase health knowledge and learn to develop healthy behaviors in order to become well-rounded individuals. The Physical Education classes are designed to practice and develop skills in activities that will help students maintain fitness throughout their lifetime. During the year, students will set and monitor personal fitness goals that will aid in the development of a personal fitness plan. Students will also participate in learning a variety of team sports and lifetime activities. During the Health portion of the class, students will learn positive decision-making skills and explore health topics related to their physical, mental, emotional, and social well-being.

Year-long encore course options:

Beginner Band (Year-Long):

This full-year course is designed for students interested in learning a woodwind or brass instrument. No prior musical experience is required—just a willingness to learn and have fun making music! This class is for 8th grade students that did NOT participate in 6th or 7th grade band. **This course requires the purchase or rental of an instrument.** Students will explore the fundamentals of playing their chosen instrument while developing essential skills in:

🎵 **Basic Music Theory** – Understanding notes, rhythms, and musical symbols

🎼 **Music Literacy** – Reading and interpreting sheet music

🎺 **Performance Skills** – Learning proper posture, breath control, and technique


🎶 **Ensemble Playing** – Performing with others in a group setting

This is a Yearlong class and the class follows an A-day/B-day schedule throughout the school year, providing regular opportunities for growth and practice. Students will participate in concerts and rehearsals after school, showcasing their progress for family and friends.

Advanced Band (Year-long):

8th Grade Advanced Band is the next step for students who have successfully completed 7th Grade Band. This full-year course is designed to refine musicianship, enhance technical skills, and prepare students for high school band programs.

Students will focus on:

 **Advanced Music Theory & Literacy** – Exploring complex rhythms, key changes, and musical expression

 **Enhanced Performance Techniques** – Mastering tone quality, articulation, phrasing, and dynamics

 **Independent & Ensemble Playing** – Developing leadership, balance, and precision within the group

 **Diverse Repertoire** – Performing a variety of musical styles and challenging pieces

This A-day/B-day course includes concerts, after-school rehearsals, and performance opportunities at school and community events. Students will take on greater responsibility as musicians, preparing them for future success in high school band and beyond.

Chorus (Year-long):

Students in year-long chorus will build upon their skills in reading music, vocal technique, and their understanding of music throughout history. Year-long chorus is for students who are interested in learning and performing intermediate levels of music. Students interested in the year-long chorus will have an audition scheduled with Ms. Guild in early August.

Advanced Art (Year-Long):

The 8th Grade Advanced Art class is designed for students who are passionate about exploring their artistic abilities and wish to deepen their understanding of various art forms. This course emphasizes creativity, critical thinking, and technical skills across a range of mediums, including drawing, painting, sculpture, and more. This course builds upon the concepts taught in earlier grades and encourages self-expression and individuality through personal projects and thematic explorations. The content in this course moves at a quicker pace, and students should be willing and able to manage their time, ideas, and materials efficiently. Students will engage in hands-on projects, participate in discussions, work collaboratively with peers, and exhibit their work in end of year 8th grade student curated showcase. A strong commitment to artistic growth, creativity, and constructive feedback is essential for success in this class.

Semester Long Encore course options:

*8th grade students not choosing year-long courses will be placed in TWO of the following **semester long** courses.*

Art (semester Long):

Students will further their knowledge and application of the elements of art (color, texture, line, shape, form, value, space) to their projects in a more advanced way and will have ample opportunity to explore artistic mediums of interest. Compositional drawing techniques and foundations will be a focus throughout the semester as well as design principles for cohesive and dynamic projects. A variety of artists, movements, and special presentation and analysis of contemporary artists within the framework of the formal art critique process will be discussed and explored. Students will have an opportunity to specialize in a medium of their choice to begin developing their own unique artistic styles.

Chorus (Semester Long):

Students in semester-long Chorus will be introduced to reading music, learn about different styles of music, and work on the fundamentals of singing. This class is intended for students who want to learn more about music and try singing at a beginning level in a group setting.

Computer Discoveries III:

Utilize the App Lab and Adafruit's Circuit Playground to develop programs that take advantage of hardware inputs and outputs. Participate in the design process from simple prototype to finished product. Explore the role of hardware platforms in computing and how different sensors can provide more effective input and output than the traditional keyboard, mouse, and monitor. Explore the knowledge and skills for careers in the Computer Science, IT, and Technology pathways.

Engineering: Technological Systems I:

Students will design and engineer systems to accomplish specific goals or processes and dissect objects to locate and troubleshoot potential sources of failure. Design, build, and document prototypes for various engineering design challenges. Explore the knowledge and skills for careers in technology, engineering, and design pathways.

Exploring Business and Entrepreneurship:

In this course, students learn the principles of business and the concepts of entrepreneurship. A focus on the necessary characteristics for being an entrepreneur will aid students in developing their career and life plan. Students learn the procedures and requirements for starting and running a business.

Exploring Apparel and Interior Design:

Students are introduced to the field of apparel with the elements of design, basic clothing construction, and the impact of marketing on clothing choices. Students also learn the basics of interior design, which includes the basic principles of design, managing living spaces, and learning how sustainable design impacts housing.

Raptor Helpers:

Students who choose this option will be required to fill out an application to be chosen for this Encore. Students will have the opportunity to provide assistance to the Abilities and Possibilities and Living and Learning classrooms as well as the Media Center.