



Kimberly Area School District

JR GERRITTS MIDDLE SCHOOL

8th Grade Course Description 2026-2027 School Year

Welcome to the home of the Gators!

At JR Gerritts Middle School, we emphasize Learning, Leadership, and Laughter, striving to make every student's journey enriching and enjoyable. This guide provides essential information about our course offerings to help students and families prepare for the **2026-2027 school year**. Eighth-grade students will complete an online registration form at school, but parents are encouraged to review the course guide together beforehand, mark their choices on the selection form, and provide a parent or guardian signature. For scheduling questions, contact the JRG Middle School office at (920) 788-7905.

CORE CLASSES *Core classes required for all students*

- ☐ Health
- ☐ Language Arts
- ☐ Math
- ☐ Science and Academic Core Extension (Ace) – Science
- ☐ Social Studies and Academic Core Extension (Ace) – Social Studies
- ☐ TLC (The Learning Community)

WORLD LANGUAGE / CULTURE REQUIREMENTS *Students must select at least one of the following.*

- ☐ Spanish 1 (*Required for students who took Spanish 1A in 7th grade*)
- ☐ World Cultures
- ☐ Online World Language

PHYSICAL EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS *Each student will select one of these classes.*

- ☐ Physical Education
- ☐ Physical Education (Fitness Focus)
- ☐ Physical Education (Strength and Performance)

ELECTIVE ACADEMY CLASSES *Elective Academy classes are not required for all students.*

- ☐ Band
- ☐ Choir
- ☐ Art: 2-Dimensional Art (2D Art) Drawing & Painting 3-Dimensional Art (3D Art), Ceramics
- ☐ Intro to Computer Science, Robotic Design, Computer Science Discoveries App Creation
- ☐ Exploring Tech (Digital Photography and Screen Printing), Intro to Construction, Intro to Engineering (Aerodynamics and Automotive), Intro to Engineering (Automation), Manufacturing Technology,



CORE CLASSES *Core classes are required for all students.*

Language Arts

In Language Arts, students develop their reading, writing, speaking, listening, viewing, and critical thinking skills in a workshop model. Our 8th-grade units build upon the work started in grade 5 and continued in grades 6 and 7. In writing, students will write a memoir, a literary analysis of a novel, and an argument piece after studying a current issue or event. In reading, we begin by working with students to develop an independent reading life, focusing on building their identity and setting goals for themselves as readers. By encouraging students to own their goals and growth, we hope to build a love of reading, so they become lifelong readers. From there we move to units centered around contemporary fiction, a short story unit exploring life lessons, literary non-fiction, and dystopian series. (Full Year)

Science

Science 8 is a comprehensive middle school science curriculum that empowers students to ask questions, design investigations, and solutions, and figure out the interesting and puzzling world. OpenSciEd empowers students to be the knowers and doers of science and develops a classroom in which the ideas we hear from our peers help to move our thinking forward as we develop our abilities to think, read, write and argue as scientists and engineers.

- Phenomenon Based - Centered around exploring phenomena or solving problems
- Driven by Student Questions - Storyline based on students' questions and ideas
- Grounded in Evidence - Incremental building and revision of ideas based on evidence
- Collaborative - WE, the class and the teacher, figure out ideas together
- Equitable - Builds a classroom culture that values ideas and learning of all

Our units revolve around Chemistry. Topics include properties of matter, energy and matter, changes in matter, atomic structure, chemical bonding, chemical reactions, and the periodic table. (Semester)

Academic Core Extension (Ace) – Science

ACE - Science 8 is designed as an extension to the general Science 8 curriculum. This course focuses on the skills of a scientist as well as physics concepts of force and motion. (Semester – Every Other Day)

Social Studies

8th grade Social Studies covers American History from First Americans through the Civil War. Students engage in investigating multiple perspectives and examining primary source documents. This class is the first of a three-part American studies program that will continue during students' 9th and 10th-grade history courses. (Semester)

Academic Core Extension (Ace) – Social Studies

ACE – Social Studies 8 is designed as an extension of the general Social Studies 8 curriculum. Students learn research skills and investigate primary source documents in the context of social studies. Students will conduct inquiries and cite historical evidence to



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support historical claims. Students learn how to think and research like historians.
(Semester – Every Other Day)

Math

Students using CPM Core Connections employ problem-solving strategies to question, investigate, gather evidence, and communicate rigorous arguments to justify their thinking. With the CPM instructional materials and manipulatives, students can tackle mathematical ideas set in everyday contexts to help them make sense of otherwise abstract principles. Students are taught how to gather and organize information about problems, break problems into smaller parts and look for patterns that lead to solutions. Students often learn in collaboration with others, sharing information, expertise, and ideas. Students also get multiple opportunities to practice and develop proficiency in their math skills. Our textbook is aligned to the 8th Grade Wisconsin Standards for Mathematics. (Full Year)

TLC (The Learning Community)

This class meets for 18 minutes each day. The time allows teachers and students to work together to make a positive impact on each student's learning at J.R.G., and helps shape our students' academic, social, and emotional well-being. TLC advisors serve as academic coaches, help create support networks for our students, and encourage students to challenge themselves personally and academically. Instruction in TLC focuses on Academic and Career Planning (ACP), which will include students reflecting on their strengths and interests to explore career possibilities through career clusters. Emphasis is also on decision-making, the importance of staying drug and alcohol-free, identifying personal sources of strength (SOS), and staying informed about general information at the school such as club involvement and upcoming activities. (Full Year)

Health

This required class meets daily for one quarter. Students learn factors that influence their physical, mental, and social growth and well-being. (Quarter)

WORLD LANGUAGE/CULTURE REQUIREMENTS *Academy classes are required of all students.*

Spanish 1 (Required for students who took Spanish 1A in 7th grade)

Students who have built a solid foundation of Spanish skills in 7th grade should continue in taking this course. This course continues to build upon all the 7th grade vocabulary, grammar and communication skills. Some of the vocabulary topics include foods, places, activities, and sports. In addition, some of the grammar that is covered includes regular and irregular verb conjugations, plural adjectives and complex question and sentence building. Therefore, the expectations are heightened because students will continue to grow these skills in all communication areas, speaking, writing, listening, and reading. Students must earn a passing grade in each quarter of Spanish 1 in 8th grade to earn 1 high school credit. If students choose to continue at KHS and have earned a passing grade in Spanish 1 in 8th grade, they will be placed in Spanish 2. (Semester)

World Cultures

In an increasingly interconnected world, it is important to have an understanding of the diverse cultures around the globe. In this class we will look at the meaning of the word



'culture,' reflect on our own culture, and explore a variety of cultures around the world from the Americas to Europe, Asia, Africa, and Oceania. We will use a variety of interesting articles and videos, as well as mapping activities, foods, songs, games, arts, combined with personal photos and anecdotes from the teacher's experiences living, working, and traveling on four continents to learn about various cultures. Each unit will culminate with a brief project in which each student will research and share one aspect of the culture that particularly interests them.

On-Line World Languages

This semester-long course is an asynchronous, self-paced World Language class offered only to our 8th grade students. The students may select one of five languages to study: Mandarin Chinese, Japanese, German, French and American Sign Language. It is a rigorous course where another district provides the instruction through the online course. A certified Kimberly teacher is assigned as the learning coach to spend time orienting students to the online learning platform, make sure that they know how to complete work and monitor student progress. Students complete all work at their own pace, submit it online and the online World Language teacher who grades the assignments and provides feedback. The World Language class is offered as an academy course in the student's schedule which meets 40 minutes every day. A successful student in this program would need to have already demonstrated good skills in time management, effective communication, independent study habits, self-motivation, and a strong work ethic. Students who enroll in this course are able to develop or demonstrate skills in time management, goal setting, independent study habits, effective communication, and regular attendance. This course is eligible for a .5 high school credit. (semester)

PHYSICAL EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS *Each student will select one of these classes.*

Physical Education

This class will include the introduction and review of individual sports, racquet sports, court games, and field games. There will also be a focus on body weight exercises and a variety of cardiovascular exercises.

Physical Education – Fitness Focus

This class will focus on non-competitive lifelong fitness activities. Activities will include weight training, yoga, running, CrossFit, and other aerobic and resistance exercises. Students will also create and develop their own personal fitness plans.

Physical Education – Strength and Performance

This class will focus on non-competitive lifelong fitness activities with an emphasis on weight training, flexibility, mobility, and power. Students will be introduced to the proper technique and work towards improvement of a variety of weightlifting exercises.

ELECTIVE ACADEMY CLASSES *Elective Academy classes are not required for all students.*

Band

Through participation in our 8th grade Band, students will continue to develop and extend their performance skills on their instrument allowing them to experience a wide variety of



music. Students will continue to build a foundation for a life-long appreciation of music that will benefit them intellectually, socially, and emotionally. Band meets every day and fills up ONE class period. (NOTE: a student can take band AND choir – this will fill up ONE class period as they will meet every other day) (Full Year)

Choir

8th Grade Choir students will sing music from various styles and historical periods. Students in this class will continue to learn solfege-based sight reading, music theory concepts, ear training, vocal performance skills, and performance/concert etiquette. Through this, students will develop a lifelong relationship with music. Choir meets every day and fills up ONE class period. (NOTE: a student can take band AND choir – this will fill up ONE class period as they will meet every other day) (Full Year)

ART CLASSES

2-Dimensional Art (2D Art) / Drawing & Painting

This studio art course offers students the opportunity to explore various media and techniques used to create a variety of 2D artworks. Emphasis in drawing will be placed on improving drawing skills from observation. Emphasis in painting will be placed on color mixing, experimenting with various painting techniques and styles with acrylics and watercolor paints. Experiences include creative and technical problem-solving, incorporating the creative process and applying the Elements of Art and the Principles of Design. The importance of quality craftsmanship will be emphasized throughout the course. Students will create multiple drawings, an acrylic painting on canvas and a watercolor painting. (Quarter)

3-Dimensional Art (3D Art)

This hands-on studio course offers students the opportunity to explore various materials, processes, and techniques in the areas of 3D Sculpture and Art Metals. Experiences include creative and technical problem-solving skills to create sculptures made with wire and plaster gauze along with other materials. Students are introduced to basic metal-smithing processes in the creation of metal art pieces. Techniques introduced include gravity casting in which pewter metal is heated with a propane torch and then cast into a mold. Emphasis will be placed on the safety and proper use of hand tools and equipment. The importance of quality craftsmanship will also be emphasized throughout the course. (Quarter)

Ceramics

This hands-on studio course offers students the opportunity to explore working with clay and creating functional and sculptural ceramic pieces. Emphasis will be placed on the hand-built processes of pinch pots, coil, slab building, and modeling techniques. Students are introduced to the potter's wheel and might have an opportunity to learn how to "throw" a pot on the potter's wheel. Various glaze applications will be introduced. All ceramic pieces will be glazed offering functional uses. Experiences will include creative and technical problem-solving. The importance of quality craftsmanship will also be emphasized throughout the course. (Quarter)



TECHNOLOGY EDUCATION

Exploring Tech (Digital Photography and Screen Printing)

In this course, students will explore concepts related to digital photography, elements that make good photos, photo editing software, and screen-printing technology. Projects that correspond to the units are designing and silk screen printing a one-color shirt and two-color shirt and studying the elements of design and the creative process through photography. Inquiry units are integrated, allowing students to explore self-selected concepts in greater depth. Career skills are emphasized across the curriculum. (Quarter)

Intro to Construction

Students will explore concepts in the field of structural engineering and construction. Students will design and build a model house, emphasizing the safety and integrity of the building. This course is a hands-on, project-based course that introduces the students to several different basic tools commonly used in the construction industry. (Quarter)

Intro to Engineering (Aerodynamics and Automotive)

Students will be challenged to think outside the box and develop critical thinking skills. This course follows a pre-engineering-based curriculum that allows students to utilize concepts in Aerodynamic and Automotive Safety Engineering integrated with those gained in Math and Science to engage in a variety of hands-on, real-world problem-solving. This class will make you think and work in ways you have not in the past. (Quarter)

Intro To Engineering (Automation)

Using the engineering design process, students will embark on tasks that will challenge their current thinking. Students will develop and build robotic structures that will compete in different challenges, resulting in the use and vast improvement of their creative thinking skills. This class will challenge and motivate. (Quarter)

Manufacturing Technology

In this course, students are exposed to value-added manufacturing strategies. The course offers students the opportunity to learn how to design and manufacture goods cost-effectively and efficiently. During the course, students will work with a variety of materials, with a focus on wood. Concepts include measurement, safety, and manufacturing strategies that use a variety of tools and machines, including cutting-edge CNC machine technology, to efficiently produce products. Students will be given the opportunity to combine the engineering design process with manufacturing processes to design and create projects that are individualized. This is a great class if you enjoy working with your hands. Students will gain a great deal of confidence in their abilities to try things on their own, and problem-solve as a team to reach a goal. Past projects in the class include CO2 dragsters, CNC-created signs, and various projects for the school community. (One Quarter for students in band/choir) (One Semester for students not in band/choir)

COMPUTER EDUCATION

Intro To Computer Science

This class is required for all students in either 7th or 8th grade - Students who did not take this class in 7th grade will likely be enrolled in 8th grade. If this class is not available, students will be placed in an alternative computer science class.



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This course introduces students to the foundational concepts of computer science and explores the impact computing and technology have on our society. Using a circuit board and a block-based code editor that supports students of all levels, students will learn to make fun projects come to life. The immediate results and feedback that students receive will allow them to quickly 'debug' and modify their programs. Students will also create animations and interactive designs while learning fundamental programming constructs and practices in the JavaScript programming language.

Robotic Design

Working independently and in teams, using Lego Spike Software, students are challenged to design, create, and program a robot that can move, react, and accomplish a task. Students will explore the ethics of computer science through the world of Robotics and consider the impact of AI learning.

Computer Science Discoveries (App Creation)

Applications continue to play an increasingly important role in how we connect with and engage the world around us. Have you ever wondered how those SMART devices in your home work? In this course, students use the design process to plan, create, and refine interactive apps that solve real-world problems while emphasizing logical thinking and an intuitive user experience. Through prototyping, testing, and debugging, students learn core programming concepts and extend their apps by connecting them to physical devices, exploring how software and hardware work together in technologies such as fitness trackers, smart lights, and other Internet of Things systems.



WANT TO HELP RAISE MONEY FOR JRG? 1st Day School Supplies makes back-to-school shopping effortless by turning your child's supply list into a customized kit with top-quality, name-brand products delivered directly to your home or school. Parents can shop online with ease, while schools benefit from fundraising opportunities tied to these convenient kits. Watch for an email with the link to order supplies!

SUPPLIES FOR ALL STUDENTS

- ☐ 1 - Pack Washable Markers
- ☐ 1 - Pink, Green & Yellow Highlighter
- ☐ 1 - Accordion File Folder or 4 Pocket Folders
- ☐ 2 - Boxes of pencils
- ☐ 2 - Boxes of Colored Pencils

CORE CLASSES

TLC (The Learning Community)

- ☐ 3 - Box of Facial Tissue
- ☐ 1 - Disinfectant Wipes

Language Arts

- ☐ 2 - Single Subject Notebooks
- ☐ 1 - Envelope with a Forever Stamp

Social Studies

- ☐ Folder
- ☐ Dry erase markers

Science

- ☐ 2 - Single Subject Notebooks or one multisubject notebook
- ☐ Folder
- ☐ Highlighters any color

Math

- ☐ 1 - Scientific Calculator (Chromebooks are not allowed on assessments)
- ☐ 1 - Small Book Cover or Paper Bag
- ☐ 2 - Notebook Graph Ruled or Quad Ruled (1 per semester)
- ☐ 4 - pack Expo Dry Erase Markers -black chisel

Spanish 1A

- ☐ 1 - 3 Ring Binder (1")
- ☐ 2 - Expo Dry Erase Markers

World Cultures

- ☐ Notebook or Folder with Loose-leaf paper

Band

- ☐ Essential Elements 2000 Book 2
- ☐ 1 - BLACK 3-Ring Binder (1") and 3-Ring Pencil Pouch Choir



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☐ 1 - 3 Ring Binder (1") and 3 Ring Pencil Pouch