

**BLUE SPRINGS R-IV
MIDDLE SCHOOL
COURSE
DESCRIPTION BOOK**

2011-2012

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MIDDLE SCHOOL PROGRAM OF STUDIES

2011 - 2012 COURSE DESCRIPTION BOOK

Blue Springs R-IV School District Grades 6, 7, & 8

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NOTICE OF NON-DISCRIMINATION

The Blue Springs School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, or age in its programs and activities. The following persons have been designated to handle inquiries regarding the non-discrimination policies:

Student Disability Related Inquiries: Assistant Director of Special Education
1801 NW Vesper, Blue Springs, MO 64015
(816) 224-1300
Fax (816) 224-1764

Student & Employee Related Inquiries: Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources
1801 NW Vesper, Blue Springs, MO 64015
(816) 224-1300
Fax (816) 224-1764

Facilities Inquiries: Director of Buildings & Grounds
1801 NW Vesper, Blue Springs, MO 64015
(816) 224-1300
Fax (816) 224-1764

PURPOSE

This Course Description Book has been developed for the students and parents in the Blue Springs School District to present important information about programs and courses offered at the four middle schools. Students and parents should be able to combine the information in the guidebook with advice received from teachers, counselors, and principals in order to make decisions about courses that will provide students with the education they need for future plans. Students and parents are encouraged to keep this guidebook as a handy reference to use throughout the school year. The web address is <http://www.bssd.net>.

BLUE SPRINGS SCHOOL DISTRICT PHILOSOPHY AND MISSION

Philosophy: The Blue Springs School District is dedicated to the proposition that each child in the district, regardless of sex, economic or social status, geographic location, race or individual difference, should experience a broad and balanced education. In order to accomplish this goal, a variety of programs and teaching methods will be employed to meet the various needs and differences in the abilities of the students. The objective of the Blue Springs School District is to establish a program to deal with each student's special gifts, and to allow each student an opportunity to attain maximum achievement.

Mission Statement: The mission of the Blue Springs School District is to create an educational community in which each individual acquires knowledge, develops skills, and functions as a literate citizen to achieve personal goals.

MIDDLE SCHOOL PROGRAM OF STUDIES

The basic curriculum is composed of a common body of knowledge which students began acquiring in elementary school. Continuing attention is placed on mastery of basic skills and academic skills, while providing opportunities for exploration to enhance students' understanding and awareness of career opportunities. It is important to continue the educational development begun in elementary school, while at the same time preparing students for the experiences of high school.

This Course Description Book describes the course offerings available to students in the Blue Springs School District middle schools. It lists required courses that all students must take, and contains descriptions of subjects from which students may choose. It is designed to be helpful to you and your student as you enter into the middle school academic program.

Middle school offers many learning opportunities for students. Teachers, counselors, support staff, and principals are ready to assist students as they progress toward high school. The curriculum is evaluated annually and revised to accommodate the changing demands of today's society upon our youth. It is our hope that each student's learning experience in middle school will be valuable and helpful. This period of adolescence is filled with promise as students begin their search for careers and life beyond high school.

This guidebook has explanations of each course offered at the middle school level. Parents and students are encouraged to keep this guidebook throughout the year as a reference. Nevertheless, questions often arise about course offerings and school life. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call a middle school counselor or principal.

All teachers and staff members are excited about the opportunities awaiting students in middle school. Please continue to support your student through this new and very important experience.

COUNSELING AND GUIDANCE

The middle school counseling program is an important part of the total educational program. Since this is a unique developmental time for adolescents, the school counselor can be a supportive person to help students work out problems related to their educational, personal, and social development.

The Missouri Comprehensive Guidance program competencies encourage counselors to provide information about exploring and planning careers, making decisions, planning for high school and beyond, improving study skills, understanding and accepting self, as well as understanding how to get along with others.

Counselors are available to facilitate conferences with students, teachers, parents and/or principals. Additionally, counselors are responsible for individual and small group counseling, classroom programs, conflict mediation, crisis intervention, educational testing, and program placement. Counselors help monitor the middle school academic experience and assist students with preparing for the high school program. Counselors are trained to assist students, teachers, and parents with questions, ideas, problems, and concerns.

BLUE SPRINGS MIDDLE SCHOOL SUPPORTIVE SERVICES

In accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education (IDEA), the Blue Springs School District provides a continuum of supportive services for eligible students identified as needing special education services. Students are determined eligible under IDEA in the following disability categories:

Autism
Deaf/Blindness
Emotional Disturbance
Hearing Impairment/Deafness
Mental Retardation/Intellectual Disability
Multiple Disabilities
Orthopedic Impairment
Other Health Impairment
Specific Learning Disabilities
Speech and/or Language Impairment
Traumatic Brain Injury
Visual Impairment/Blind
Young Child with a Developmental Delay

Enrollment in courses is planned during the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) review. Please contact your student's counselor or special education process coordinator with questions regarding enrollment and supportive services.

LIBRARY/MEDIA PROGRAM

Library Media Center services are available to all students in grades 6-8. A full-time library media specialist assists students during school hours. The library media specialist collaborates with teachers to integrate basic information literacy skills across the curriculum. These skills include the following objectives:

1. Students will define the information problem.
2. Students will develop information seeking strategies.
3. Students will locate and access information.
4. Students will organize and present information.
5. Students will evaluate the research process and product.
6. Students will select a variety of materials appropriate to their reading level.
7. Students will seek information related to various personal interests.
8. Students will use information responsibly by citing sources.

CAREER PATHS OVERVIEW

What Are Career Paths? Career paths are clusters of occupations and careers that are grouped because many of the people in them share similar interests and strengths. All paths include a variety of occupations that require different levels of education and training. Selecting a career path provides you with an area of FOCUS, along with FLEXIBILITY, and a VARIETY of ideas to pursue.



ARTS AND COMMUNICATION

Occupations related to the humanities and the performing, visual, literary, and media arts. These may include architecture, interior design, creative writing, fashion design, film, fine arts, graphic design and production, journalism, languages, radio, television, advertising, and public relations.



BUSINESS, MANAGEMENT & TECHNOLOGY

Occupations related to the business environment. These may include entrepreneurship, sales, marketing, computer/information systems, finance, accounting, personnel, economics, and management.



HEALTH SERVICES

Occupations related to the promotion of health and the treatment of disease. These may include research prevention, treatment, and related technologies.



HUMAN SERVICES

Occupations related to economic, political and social systems. These may include education, government, law and law enforcement, leisure and recreation, military, religion, childcare, and social services.



INDUSTRIAL AND ENGINEERING TECHNOLOGY

Occupations related to the technologies necessary to design, develop, install, or maintain physical systems. These may include engineering, manufacturing, construction, service, and related technologies.



NATURAL RESOURCES

Occupations related to the environment and natural resources. These may include agriculture, earth sciences, environmental sciences, fisheries, forestry, horticulture, and wildlife.

GRADE 6

OVERVIEW OF CURRICULAR OFFERINGS

REQUIRED COURSES

Communication Arts 6.....	all year
Reading 6	all year
Mathematics 6 or Extended Math 6	all year
Science 6.....	all year
Social Studies 6	all year
Physical Education/Health 6	*all year

EXPLORATORY COURSES

(9-week rotation – Students choose four from the following list.)

Art	nine weeks
F.A.C.S. of Life	nine weeks
Language and Culture Exploration	nine weeks
Digital Keyboarding***	nine weeks
On the Road to Fame	nine weeks
Introduction to Technology/Engineering.....	nine weeks
Read 180**	

(Students choose from one of the following list.)

Vocal Music	*all year
Beginning Band	*all year
Beginning Orchestra	*all year

*These classes meet on alternating days.

**Read 180 will take the place of the exploratory courses for students who are in need of improving their reading skills.

***All middle school students are required to take a computer keyboarding course sometime during 6th, 7th or 8th grade.

COURSE DESCRIPTIONS: GRADE 6

REQUIRED CORE COURSES

COMMUNICATION ARTS 6 – Sixth grade communication arts students will use language as a tool for learning and communicating in all disciplines. Students will write in a variety of forms for different purposes and audiences in order to discover and control their own writing processes. They will address issues of meaning as well as issues of grammar, usage, and mechanics. A variety of literature will be used as a resource to allow students to interact with and respond to professional and peer writers. Literary elements will be discussed and applied to the student's use of language. Emphasis will be placed on MAP skills and standards.

READING 6 – Sixth grade reading will use a variety of literature as a resource to allow students to reflect and respond. Literary elements will be discussed and applied to the students' use of language. Students will learn and practice reading strategies to aid comprehension. Students will also use a variety of media reference resources to obtain information. MAP skills and standards will be emphasized.

MATHEMATICS 6 – Sixth grade math emphasizes number sense. Units include decimals, fractions, measurement, mental math, geometry, statistics, graphing, and probability. The units incorporate critical thinking and logical reasoning skills in problem solving. (The selection for 7th grade Pre-Algebra will be determined during the 2nd semester prior to enrollment.)

OR

EXTENDED MATH 6 – This course is designed for the highly motivated student that meets the criteria of having an A in 5th grade mathematics, a high score on the common assessment, and advanced or proficient score on the MAP. This course will provide a challenge beyond the regular sixth grade math curriculum. These students must show proficiency in math skills learned K-5. Students enrolled in this course will be expected to handle a rigorous course of study. (The selection for 7th grade Pre-Algebra will be determined during the 2nd semester prior to enrollment.)

SCIENCE 6 – This course involves a general framework with a physical science emphasis. This will include hands-on activities to implement the process skills, metric measurement, equipment use, and safety. Students will be engaged in laboratory experiences designed to highlight the scientific process, including scientific research.

SOCIAL STUDIES 6 – This class is an introduction to the social sciences and the skills associated with them. These areas include government, economics, geography, ethnic cultures, historical and current events, and general study skills.

COURSE DESCRIPTIONS: GRADE 6

EXPLORATORY CLASSES

Nine Week Exploratory Rotation – All sixth grade students (except those required to be in Read 180) will pick four classes from the following area and rotate through them every nine weeks: Art, F.A.C.S. of Life, Language and Culture Exploration, Digital Keyboarding, On the Road to Fame, and Introduction to Tech/Engineering.

ART 6

This 9-week course is designed to emphasize exploration of art concepts using the elements and principles of art as a framework. Students engage in decision making and problem-solving skills from an artistic point of view. This class uses a variety of mediums such as pencil, ceramic, paint, ink, fibers, and other materials.

F.A.C.S. OF LIFE 6

Interested in learning how to cook simple snacks or how to sew an easy project? Then this class is for you! Students will focus on health, basic cooking skills, and beginning sewing skills.

LANGUAGE AND CULTURE EXPLORATION 6

This 9-week class is designed to give sixth grade students exposure to a variety of languages, cultures and geography

DIGITAL KEYBOARDING 6

This is an exploratory course that focuses on the introduction of correct keyboarding techniques and touch typing through daily practice to build speed and accuracy.

ON THE ROAD TO FAME 6

This 9-week exploratory course is designed to develop a comfort level for students in performance-based activities. Activities may include pantomime, improvisation, storytelling, acting scenes, TV commercials, group discussion, and introductory speeches.

INTRODUCTION TO TECH/ENGINEERING 6

Enter the world of technology and engineering with exciting, challenging, hands-on projects! Projects may include: computer design software, electronic bug, construction of simple machines and structures, and more! This is a 9-week 6th grade class.

READ 180 LAB 6

This lab is designed to improve the reading skills of students who are reading significantly below grade level. Students' scores on reading inventories, standardized assessments, and teacher recommendations will be used to determine placement. Students who are in need of reading assistance will be enrolled in READ 180 rather than an exploratory course. Students are expected to maintain continuous enrollment in the lab until their reading progresses to a level that will enable them to be successful.

COURSE DESCRIPTIONS: GRADE 6

PE/HEALTH PLUS ROTATION

PE + ROTATION – All sixth grade students will rotate Physical Education all year, every other day, with either Beginning Band, Beginning Orchestra, or Vocal Music.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION/HEALTH 6 – Physical Education is a required dress out course for all sixth grade students all year, every other day. The purpose of physical education is to establish a basis for a lifetime of physical fitness, as well as promote involvement in team sports. A student health and wellness program will be introduced and taught in conjunction with the physical education curriculum. Topics will focus on the benefits of an active lifestyle, good nutritional practices, and healthy life-long behaviors.

Physical Education is **NOT** competitive athletics. It is a place for learning self-control, leadership, responsibility, and skill. Conditioning will be stressed with all activities and the *Fitnessgram* program will be used to measure student's fitness level twice a year.

VOCAL MUSIC 6

This year long class, which rotates with physical education/health, will focus on the fundamentals of vocal performance singing. Emphasis will be on pitch matching, tone quality, breath support, and ear-training. Concert participation is mandatory and will be included in the student's grade.

BEGINNING BAND 6 – In beginning band, students will be introduced to the exciting world of instrumental music. No previous band experience is required, but students who would like to be selected for percussion should already have two years of piano lessons. The band director will help students select the most appropriate instrument. Each student will need to provide the recommended instrument and supplies. Instrument changes are done only with approval of the band director. Daily practice at home and all public performances are required and will be a part of the student's semester grade.

BEGINNING ORCHESTRA 6 – Beginning orchestra students are introduced to the basics of making music. No prior instrument background is required. Instrument choices are: violin, viola, cello or string bass. Students provide their own instruments, a cello or bass may be available for at school use, but all cellists must own their own instrument for at home practice and performances. We generally do not own enough basses to send one home, so renting one is the best option. The goal of beginning orchestra is for each student to produce a pleasant tone, know how to read music, and exhibit good playing and practice habits. Daily at home practice records will be a graded part of the class. A minimum of two evening performances will be required during the school year. Private instruction is encouraged.

STRETCH 6 (Students Reach Excellence Through Challenge) – Middle School
STRETCH is a program for students in grades 6 – 8 who have been identified through a district screening process as academically gifted. This class focuses on the development of higher-level thinking skills and creativity through differentiated activities, curricular units, and competitions. STRETCH meets on a daily basis in lieu of sixth grade Reading.

GRADE 7

OVERVIEW OF CURRICULAR OFFERINGS

REQUIRED COURSES

Communication Arts 7.....	all year
Mathematics 7 or Pre-Algebra 7	all year
Science 7	all year
Social Studies 7	all year
Academic Skills-7	*all year
Physical Education/Health 7	*all year

EXPLORATORY COURSES

All the 7th grade students will choose 4 semester classes or 2 semester classes and orchestra or band.

Art Foundations – 7 th & 8 th	semester
Art in Culture – 7 th & 8 th	semester
Digital Keyboarding & Beyond – 7 th & 8 ^{th***}	semester
Interactive Computer Technology – 7 th & 8 ^{th***}	semester
Bon Appétit – 7 th & 8 th	semester
Fashion 101 – 7 th & 8 th	semester
World Languages – 7 th & 8 th	semester
Debate & Forensics – 7 th & 8 th	semester
The Show Must Go On – 7 th & 8 th	semester
Technology & Engineering – 7 th & 8 th	semester
Technology & Engineering in Motion – 7 th & 8 th	semester
Experience Music – 7 th & 8 th	semester
Men's Choir – 7 th & 8 th	semester
Women's Choir – 7 th & 8 th	semester
Intermediate Band – 7 th & 8 th	all year
Advanced Band – 7 th & 8 th	all year
Intermediate Orchestra – 7 th & 8 th	all year
Advanced Orchestra – 7 th & 8 th	all year
Read 180**	

*These classes meet on alternating days.

**Read 180 will take the place of the exploratory courses for students who are in need of improving reading skills.

***All middle school students are required to take a computer keyboarding course sometime during 6th, 7th or 8th grade.

COURSE DESCRIPTIONS: GRADE 7

REQUIRED CORE COURSES

COMMUNICATION ARTS 7 – Seventh grade communication arts students will use language as a tool for learning and communicating in all disciplines. Students will write in a variety of forms for different purposes and audiences in order to discover and control their own writing processes. They will address issues of meaning as well as issues of grammar, usage, and mechanics. A variety of literature will be used as a resource to allow students to interact with and respond to professional and peer writers. Literary elements will be discussed and applied to the student's use of language. Emphasis will be placed on MAP skills and standards.

MATHEMATICS 7 – Seventh grade math emphasizes computational skills and improvement of problem solving in the real world. General material covered during the year includes rational numbers, geometry, measurement, statistics and probability, expressions and equations, and appropriate use of the calculator. Students will be evaluated on a continuing basis and provided pre-algebra material when appropriate.

OR

PRE-ALGEBRA 7 – Students taking Pre-Algebra should be planning to follow a rigorous course of study. The comprehensive content of this course includes all standard topics of the middle school mathematics. It includes concepts such as operations involving rational numbers, expressions, equations, use of formulas, solving and graphing linear equations and inequalities, solving proportions, applications of percent, probability, and concepts of geometry that include perimeter, area, volume, and surface area. (The selection for 8th grade Algebra will be determined 2nd semester.)

SCIENCE 7 - This course offers the seventh grade student an overview of the six major kingdoms of living things and their relationship to the environment. The organisms' adaptability to the various biotic and abiotic factors will also be examined. The final unit of study will be of the human systems.

SOCIAL STUDIES 7 – This course will provide an overview of the major periods or ages in ancient history, which set the stage for the development of modern civilization. Units will provide political, economic, and geographical insights.

ACADEMIC SKILLS 7 – As a component of the core block, academic skills provides the opportunity for adolescents to develop skills related to reading, writing, math, science, and career exploration.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION/HEALTH 7 - Physical Education is a required dress out course for all seventh grade students all year, every other day. The purpose of physical education is to establish a basis for a lifetime of physical fitness, as well as promote involvement in individual and team sports. A student health and wellness program will be continued in 7th grade and taught in conjunction with the physical education curriculum. Topics will focus on the benefits of an active lifestyle, good nutritional practices, and healthy life-long behaviors. Students will also receive instruction in communicable diseases.

Physical Education is **NOT** competitive athletics. It is a place for learning self-control, leadership, responsibility, and skill. Conditioning will be stressed with all activities and the *Fitnessgram* program will be used to measure student's fitness level.

COURSE DESCRIPTIONS: GRADE 7

EXPLORATORY CLASSES

All 7th grade students will choose 4 semester classes or 2 semester classes and band or orchestra.

ART FOUNDATIONS (7th & 8th)

This semester course for 7th and 8th grade students is designed to build on the skills and concepts taught in 6th grade art. Students begin to make more artistic choices as they explore art as a means of expression and communication. Exploration is emphasized, and the creative process is analyzed and investigated. Projects include drawing, painting, print making, and sculpture.

ART IN CULTURE (7th & 8th)

This semester class for 7th and 8th grade students emphasizes how art is connected to the world. Students will learn the function of art in history and culture by designing art projects based on historical works of art and periods in history. Students will use a variety of mediums, creating both two and three-dimensional works of art.

DIGITAL KEYBOARDING AND BEYOND (7th & 8th)

This is an exploratory course that begins with keyboarding skills to help students develop proper keyboarding techniques, accuracy and speed. In this hands-on course students will also learn to effectively surf the web, create interactive PowerPoint presentations, and construct various publications such as calendars, flyers and brochures.

INTERACTIVE COMPUTER TECHNOLOGY (7th & 8th)

Are you ready for a semester filled with exciting and interactive computer projects? In this hands-on course students will review keyboarding skills and create various interactive multimedia projects using Moviemaker, PowerPoint, Publisher, Excel and Word.

BON APPETIT (7th & 8th)

Cooking will be the highlight of this course. Students will focus on the importance of safety and sanitation, measuring ingredients, and the MYPyramid. Students will become skilled at reading a recipe, cooking terminology, and different types of cooking techniques.

FASHION 101 (7th & 8th)

Sewing fun and challenging projects will be the spotlight of this class. It is rewarding to complete a project that you have made yourself. Students will also learn about different fashion designers, how to care for clothing, and housing & home furnishings. The student will provide their own fabrics for class, so cost will vary depending on personal fabric choices.

WORLD LANGUAGES (7th & 8th)

This semester class introduces Mandarin Chinese, French, German and Spanish cultures, geography and language. This course reflects the four languages offered in the Blue Springs School District.

DEBATE & FORENSICS (7th & 8th)

We'll sharpen your personal communication skills by preparing, presenting, and evaluating performance-based activities in Debate and Forensics. Improvisation skills and group communication/problem solving will also be explored thru various games and activities. Forensics is competitive drama and includes storytelling, prose, poetry, duet acting, and other events. Debate is argumentation using reason and logic.

THE SHOW MUST GO ON! (7th & 8th)

Eager to see your name in lights? Here is a chance to shine! This class includes acting, radio theatre, Shakespeare, stage combat, play reading, reader's theatre, voice production, theatre history, and group presentations.

TECHNOLOGY AND ENGINEERING (7th & 8th)

Are you creative? Do you like to make things? This is the class for you! Students will use computers to design, program, animate, and present their work. Hands-on projects may include: house design, bridge design, robots, video presentation, Legos, Fischertechniks and more! This is an 18-week 7th and 8th grade class.

TECHNOLOGY AND ENGINEERING IN MOTION (7th & 8th)

Racers, start your engines! Projects in this fun, hands-on class may include: dragsters, rockets, maglev, air racers, computer modeling software, Rube Goldberg and more! This is an 18-week 7th and 8th grade class.

EXPERIENCE MUSIC! (7th & 8th)

From Ragtime to Rap, music reflects our culture. Come explore the roots of modern music through song, movement, musicals, and rhythm activities. You will have a chance to participate in a performance this semester (included in the final semester grade) to showcase your skills! Bravissimo!

MEN'S CHOIR (7th & 8th)

Do you enjoy singing? This semester class is for you! Specifically designed for young men's voices, we will focus on vocal style and technique using a variety of music. You will show off your new skills in concert (part of the final grade).

WOMEN'S CHOIR (7th & 8th)

Do you enjoy singing? This semester class is for you! Specifically designed for young women's voices, we will focus on vocal style and technique using a variety of music. You will show off your new skills in concert (part of the final grade).

READ 180 LAB 7 - This lab is designed to improve the reading skills of students who are reading significantly below grade level. Students' scores on reading inventories, standardized assessments and teacher recommendation will be used to determine placement. Students who are identified in need of reading assistance will be enrolled in READ 180 rather than an exploratory course. Students are expected to maintain continuous enrollment in the lab until their reading progresses to a level that will enable them to be successful.

INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC (Year Long)

INTERMEDIATE BAND (7th & 8th)

In intermediate band, students refine the fundamental playing techniques learned in beginning band. Audition and approval from the instructor are required in order to take the course. Instrument changes are done only with approval of the band director. Students must provide their own instrument unless they play bassoon, bass clarinet, baritone saxophone, French horn, baritone, or tuba. Daily practice at home and all public performances are required and will be a part of the student's semester grade.

ADVANCED BAND (7th & 8th)

In advanced band, students continue technical and musical development from intermediate band. Audition and approval from the instructor are required in order to take the course. Instrument changes are done only with approval of the band director. Students must provide their own instrument unless they play bassoon, bass clarinet, baritone saxophone, French horn, baritone, or tuba. Daily practice at home and all public performances are required and will be a part of the student's semester grades.

INTERMEDIATE ORCHESTRA (7th & 8th)

Intermediate orchestra refines the fundamental playing techniques learned in beginning orchestra. Successful completion of Beginning Orchestra or audition and approval from the instructor are required. Instrument changes are done only with the approval of the instructor. Music of various styles will be studied and performed. Daily at-home practice and all performances are required and will be a part of the student's semester grade. Students must provide their own violin, viola and cello. The school may provide a string bass based on availability. The desired outcome of intermediate orchestra is for each student to further develop tone, range, and technical facility and apply those skills to a more diverse and demanding repertoire. Introduction of vibrato and extended positions will expand the student's mastery of their instrument. Private instruction is encouraged.

ADVANCED ORCHESTRA (7th & 8th)

Advanced orchestra continues the technical development from intermediate orchestra and applies students' acquired techniques to a more extensive and diverse repertoire. An audition and approval from the instructor are required. Daily at-home practice and concert participation are required and will be part of the student's semester grade. Students must provide their own violin, viola or cello. The school may provide a string bass based on availability. The desired outcome of advanced orchestra is for each student to further develop tone, range, and technical facility and apply those skills to a more diverse and demanding repertoire, ultimately preparing the student to be successful in high school orchestra. The improvement of vibrato, extended positions and a more diverse key familiarity will be stresses. Private instruction is encouraged.

STRETCH 7 (Students Reach Excellence Through Challenge) – Middle School
STRETCH is a program for students in grades 6 – 8 who have been identified through a district screening process as academically gifted. This class focuses on the development of higher-level thinking skills and creativity through differentiated activities, curricular units, and competitions. STRETCH meets every day in lieu of an Exploratory course.

GRADE 8

OVERVIEW OF CURRICULAR OFFERINGS

REQUIRED COURSES

Communication Arts 8.....	all year
Pre-Algebra 8 or Algebra I 8	all year
Science 8.....	all year
Social Studies 8	all year
Academic Skills 8.....	*all year
Physical Education/Health 8	*all year

EXPLORATORY COURSES

(Students will choose 4 semester courses or 2 semester classes and 1 year long class or 2 year long classes

Art Foundations – 7 th & 8 th	semester
Art In Culture – 7 th & 8 th	semester
Digital Keyboarding & Beyond – 7 th & 8 ^{th***}	semester
Interactive Computer Technology – 7 th & 8 ^{th***}	semester
Bon Appétit – 7 th & 8 th	semester
Fashion 101 – 7 th & 8 th	semester
World Languages – 7 th & 8 th	semester
Debate & Forensics – 7 th & 8 th	semester
The Show Must Go On – 7 th & 8 th	semester
Technology & Engineering – 7 th & 8 th	semester
Technology & Engineering in Motion – 7 th & 8 th	semester
Experience Music – 7 th & 8 th	semester
Men’s Choir – 7 th & 8 th	semester
Women’s Choir – 7 th & 8 th	semester
Intermediate Band – 7 th & 8 th	all year
Advanced Band – 7 th & 8 th	all year
Intermediate Orchestra – 7 th & 8 th	all year
Advanced Orchestra – 7 th & 8 th	all year
Spanish I – 8 th	all year
Read 180**	

*These classes meet on alternating days

**Read 180 will take the place of one exploratory block for students who are in need of improving reading skills.

***All middle school students are required to take a computer keyboarding course sometime during 6th, 7th or 8th grade.

COURSE DESCRIPTIONS: GRADE 8

REQUIRED CORE COURSES

COMMUNICATION ARTS 8 – Eighth grade communication arts students will use language as a tool for learning and communicating in all disciplines. Students will write in a variety of forms for different purposes and audiences in order to discover and control their own writing processes. They will address issues of meaning as well as issues of grammar, usage, and mechanics. A variety of literature will be used as a resource to allow students to interact with and respond to professional and peer writers. Literary elements will be discussed and applied to the student’s use of language. Emphasis will be placed on MAP skills and standards.

PRE-ALGEBRA 8 – The comprehensive content of this course includes all standard topics of the middle school mathematics. It includes concepts such as operations involving rational numbers, expressions, equations, use of formulas, solving and graphing linear equations and inequalities, solving proportions, applications of percent, probability, and concepts of geometry that include perimeter, area, volume, and surface area.

OR

ALGEBRA I – Students taking Algebra I should plan to follow an advanced math curriculum in high school. They will use the same textbook and the same course objectives as those used in Algebra I classes taught at the senior high schools. The student will begin to work with variables, expressions, and basic equations. The student will then progress to solving linear and quadratic equations, graphing those equations and factoring them. Students will also be asked to solve word problems a person may encounter in everyday life situations. Since the amount of content and the topics covered are the same as in high school Algebra I, a student who earns “B” or above will be enrolled in Geometry in ninth grade. Students may be asked to complete an Algebra Prognosis Test prior to final enrollment for 9th grade math. See page 32 for secondary math curriculum flow chart. (NOTE: Students completing Algebra I in 8th grade do NOT receive high school credit.) Students must have completed Pre-Algebra with an A or B to be enrolled in Algebra I.

SCIENCE 8 – This course is designed to further develop skill in using the mental and physical tools for study of issues in science, technology and society. The students are encouraged to use these tools to gain an appreciation of Earth and where it fits in the Universe. The areas of study include scientific inquiry, scientific relevance, matter and energy, the universe and the earth systems such as meteorology, hydrology, oceanography, and geology.

SOCIAL STUDIES 8 – This survey course is designed to have the learner explore the dynamic forces that shaped American history from exploration to the American Revolution. A main purpose of the course is to help students gain an appreciation of their heritage and a clearer understanding of those events and people that became the American legacy.

ACADEMIC SKILLS 8 – As a component of the eighth grade core block, Academic Skills builds on the components from the 7th grade Academic Skills class by continuing to assist students with the development of skills for their futures. This class meets all year, every other day. The units in this class include reading, writing, mathematics, MAP skills, study skills, and career planning.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION/HEALTH 8 – Physical Education is a required course for eighth grade students. This class meets all year, every other day. The purpose of physical education is to establish a basis for a lifetime of physical fitness, as well as promote involvement in individual and team sports.

Physical Education is **NOT** competitive athletics. It is a place for learning self-control, leadership, responsibility, and skill. Conditioning will be stressed with all activities and the *Fitnessgram* program will be used to measure the student's fitness level.

Health education at the 8th grade level will focus on human systems. Through project-based activities, students will learn the skeletal, muscular, and circulatory systems, and the positive effects of healthy behaviors on the body.

COURSE DESCRIPTIONS: GRADE 8

EXPLORATORY COURSES

8th grade students may choose 4 semester classes or 2 semester classes and 1 year long class or 2 year long classes.

ART FOUNDATIONS (7th & 8th)

This semester course for 7th and 8th grade students is designed to build on the skills and concepts taught in 6th grade art. Students begin to make more artistic choices as they explore art as a means of expression and communication. Exploration is emphasized, and the creative process is analyzed and investigated. Projects include drawing, painting, print making, and sculpture.

ART IN CULTURE (7th & 8th)

This semester class for 7th and 8th grade students emphasizes how art is connected to the world. Students will learn the function of art in history and culture by designing art projects based on historical works of art and periods in history. Students will use a variety of mediums, creating both two and three-dimensional works of art.

DIGITAL KEYBOARDING AND BEYOND (7th & 8th)

This is an exploratory course that begins with keyboarding skills to help students develop proper keyboarding techniques, accuracy and speed. In this hands-on course students will also learn to effectively surf the web, create interactive PowerPoint presentations, and construct various publications such as calendars, flyers and brochures.

INTERACTIVE COMPUTER TECHNOLOGY (7th & 8th)

Are you ready for a semester filled with exciting and interactive computer projects? In this hands-on course students will review keyboarding skills and create various interactive multimedia projects using Moviemaker, PowerPoint, Publisher, Excel and Word.

BON APPETIT (7th & 8th)

Cooking will be the highlight of this course. Students will focus on the importance of safety and sanitation, measuring ingredients, and the MYPyramid. Students will become skilled at reading a recipe, cooking terminology, and different types of cooking techniques.

FASHION 101 (7th & 8th)

Sewing fun and challenging projects will be the spotlight of this class. It is rewarding to complete a project that you have made yourself. Students will also learn about different fashion designers, how to care for clothing, and housing & home furnishings. The student will provide their own fabrics for class, so cost will vary depending on personal fabric choices.

WORLD LANGUAGES (7th & 8th)

This semester class introduces Mandarin Chinese, French, German and Spanish cultures, geography and language. This course reflects the four languages offered in the Blue Springs School District.

DEBATE & FORENSICS (7th & 8th)

We'll sharpen your personal communication skills by preparing, presenting, and evaluating performance-based activities in Debate and Forensics. Improvisation skills and group communication/problem solving will also be explored thru various games and activities. Forensics is competitive drama and includes storytelling, prose, poetry, duet acting, and other events. Debate is argumentation using reason and logic.

THE SHOW MUST GO ON! (7th & 8th)

Eager to see your name in lights? Here is a chance to shine! This class includes acting, radio theatre, Shakespeare, stage combat, play reading, reader's theatre, voice production, theatre history, and group presentations.

TECHNOLOGY AND ENGINEERING (7th & 8th)

Are you creative? Do you like to make things? This is the class for you! Students will use computers to design, program, animate, and present their work. Hands-on projects may include: house design, bridge design, robots, video presentation, Legos, Fischertechnik and more! This is an 18-week 7th and 8th grade class.

TECHNOLOGY AND ENGINEERING IN MOTION (7th & 8th)

Racers, start your engines! Projects in this fun, hands-on class may include: dragsters, rockets, maglev, air racers, computer modeling software, Rube Goldberg and more! This is an 18-week 7th and 8th grade class.

EXPERIENCE MUSIC! (7th & 8th)

From Ragtime to Rap, music reflects our culture. Come explore the roots of modern music through song, movement, musicals, and rhythm activities. You will have a chance to participate in a performance this semester (included in the final semester grade) to showcase your skills! Bravissimo!

MEN'S CHOIR (7th & 8th)

Do you enjoy singing? This semester class is for you! Specifically designed for young men's voices, we will focus on vocal style and technique using a variety of music. You will show off your new skills in concert (part of the final grade).

WOMEN'S CHOIR (7th & 8th)

Do you enjoy singing? This semester class is for you! Specifically designed for young women's voices, we will focus on vocal style and technique using a variety of music. You will show off your new skills in concert (part of the final grade).

READ 180 LAB 8 - This lab is designed to improve the reading skills of students who are reading significantly below grade level. Students' scores on reading inventories, standardized assessments, and teacher recommendation will be used to determine placement. The lab will take the place of an exploratory block. Students are expected to maintain continuous enrollment in the lab until their reading progresses to a level that will enable them to be successful.

EXPLORATORY COURSES (Continued)

Eighth grade students may choose two year-long elective classes, from the following list, rather than four semester electives: Intermediate Band, Advanced Band, Intermediate Orchestra, Advanced Orchestra or Spanish I

INTERMEDIATE BAND (7th & 8th)

In intermediate band, students refine the fundamental playing techniques learned in beginning band. Audition and approval from the instructor are required in order to take the course. Instrument changes are done only with approval of the band director. Students must provide their own instrument unless they play bassoon, bass clarinet, baritone saxophone, French horn, baritone, or tuba. Daily practice at home and all public performances are required and will be a part of the student's semester grade.

ADVANCED BAND (7th & 8th)

In advanced band, students continue technical and musical development from intermediate band. Audition and approval from the instructor are required in order to take the course. Instrument changes are done only with approval of the band director. Students must provide their own instrument unless they play bassoon, bass clarinet, baritone saxophone, French horn, baritone, or tuba. Daily practice at home and all public performances are required and will be a part of the student's semester grades.

INTERMEDIATE ORCHESTRA (7th & 8th)

Intermediate orchestra refines the fundamental playing techniques learned in beginning orchestra. Successful completion of Beginning Orchestra or audition and approval from the instructor are required. Instrument changes are done only with the approval of the instructor. Music of various styles will be studied and performed. Daily at-home practice and all performances are required and will be a part of the student's semester grade. Students must provide their own violin, viola and cello. The school may provide a string bass based on availability. The desired outcome of intermediate orchestra is for each student to further develop tone, range, and technical facility and apply those skills to a more diverse and demanding repertoire. Introduction of vibrato and extended positions will expand the student's mastery of their instrument. Private instruction is encouraged.

ADVANCED ORCHESTRA (7th & 8th)

Advanced orchestra continues the technical development from intermediate orchestra and applies students' acquired techniques to a more extensive and diverse repertoire. An audition and approval from the instructor are required. Daily at-home practice and concert participation are required and will be part of the student's semester grade. Students must provide their own violin, viola or cello. The school may provide a string bass based on availability. The desired outcome of advanced orchestra is for each student to further develop tone, range, and technical facility and apply those skills to a more diverse and demanding repertoire, ultimately preparing the student to be successful in high school orchestra. The improvement of vibrato, extended positions and a more diverse key familiarity will be stresses. Private instruction is encouraged.

SPANISH I (8th ONLY)

This year-long class consists of building skills in speaking, listening comprehension, reading, and writing, with an introduction to simple grammar, culture, and geography.

Prerequisite: A “B” or above in 7th grade English class and/or approval of that instructor. Eighth grade students enrolled in the first level of a foreign language who earn a “B” or above and wish to continue in the same language, will be required to enroll in the **second** level of that language during their ninth grade year rather than repeat the first level. (NOTE: This class covers the same content and course objectives, and uses the same textbook as the Spanish I high school class, however it is not transcribed as high school credit).

Gifted

STRETCH 8 (Students Reach Excellence Through Challenge) – Middle School STRETCH is a program for students in grades 6–8 who have been identified through a district screening process as academically gifted. This class focuses on the development of higher-level thinking skills and creativity through differentiated activities, curricular units, and competitions. STRETCH meets every day in lieu of an Exploratory course.

**BLUE SPRINGS SCHOOL DISTRICT
MATHEMATICS FLOW CHART
Grades 6-9**

