

Avondale Middle School
8th Grade
Curriculum Guide
2025-2026





Katie Gomez, Principal
Arryn Schneider, Assistant Principal
Dave McMillan, 8th Grade Counselor

Eighth Grade

An Avondale Middle School 8th grade schedule consists of 6 academic class periods in a year. The school year consists of two semesters. All students are also assigned to a daily 32 minute advisory period.

Eighth grade students are required to take 4 periods of required core courses. Students also have 2 periods of exploratory courses. These exploratory courses consist of **semester-long** grading periods. They may also take two different STEM classes (which are **semester long** courses). Based on whether the student is a music student determines exploratory offerings.

Required Core Courses	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Math 8 or Algebra I (Based on Placement *)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Science
<input type="checkbox"/>	English 8 or Advanced English 8 (Based on Placement**)
<input type="checkbox"/>	U.S. History

8 th Grade Exploratory Course Offerings	
Music Students	Non-Music Students
<p style="text-align: center;"></p> <p>Choose one of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Band 8 (Beginning-Intermediate-Advanced) Choir 8 (First or second year placement) <p>Remaining exploratory offerings include:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Semester Electives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Environmental Science AMS Publications Art 8 Leadership Multi-Media Physical Education 8 STEM 8 Architecture STEM 8 Medical Sports and Music Lit World Language-French, German, or Spanish (year long class) 	<p style="text-align: center;"></p> <p>Exploratory offerings include:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Semester Electives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Environmental Science AMS Publications Art 8 Leadership Multi-Media Physical Education 8 STEM 8 Architecture STEM 8 Medical Sports and Music Lit World Language-French, German, or Spanish (year long class)
<p>Remediation in reading and math or Academic Center support classes may be recommended for students who would benefit from these classes based on standardized test scores and screeners in reading and math.</p>	

Eighth Grade Course Descriptions

Advisory - Year-Long

Students at AMS will have a 32 minute advisory period referred to as “Mustang Roundup”. The class will meet mid-morning, between 2nd and 3rd periods. Student advisory groups are made up of grade level students that are led by teacher mentors. The goal of Mustang Roundup is to provide a personalized connection to our learning environment where all students will be well known by at least one adult advocate. This relationship and connection to school is fostered through intentionally scheduled lessons, group activities, and one-to-one interactions with the advisor. The structure of this program will provide opportunities for character education, bullying prevention lessons, positive behavior support, independent reading, academic monitoring, organizational meetings, school wide initiatives, and fun cooperative activities.

SUPPLEMENTARY CURRICULUM FOR 8TH GRADE STUDENTS

8TH GRADE STUDENTS TAKING HIGH SCHOOL LEVEL COURSES: According to state law, students who take courses in middle school with a curriculum that is identical to a course at the high school (such as Algebra I, French I, Spanish I, German I, Band or BIO) – as well as 8th graders who take high school courses – will receive credit on their high school transcripts, although students must still earn 23 credits in grades 9 – 12. Students who are taking high school/college courses prior to attending 9th grade at the high school will receive letter grades on their transcripts unless there is a request by the caregivers for them to receive a G (passing) or an H (no credit). This request will need to be sent in writing to the student’s counselor by the end of the semester. Note: All grades (even letter grades) and G/H’s will not be calculated into the high school GPA if they were taken prior to the start of the student’s 9th grade year. Additionally, students will need to communicate with potential college/universities to determine if multiple years of a world language in high school is required/highly recommended for admissions. ***Selection and enrollment in a high school course is a year-long commitment and may not be dropped.***

CORE COURSES

Advanced English 8 - Year-Long

Students are placed in this course through a set of placement criteria. Building on the mastery obtained in Advanced English 7, students continue building a critical foundation in reading and writing narrative, informational, and argument texts. Through analysis and production of texts in these three modes, students become more adept readers, thinkers, and writers. Across the year, students come to understand the distinctions between narrative, informational, and argument texts by studying fiction and nonfiction in a variety of formats and developing a more thorough understanding of audience and purpose when reading and writing. Students are encouraged to be independent, engaged, and empowered learners who value close reading, idea generation, drafting, and revision. Students explore a range of literary genres including memoir, narrative poetry, realistic fiction, and informational text. A year-long Independent reading program focuses on reading stamina, close reading strategies, and oral communication skills. Students are expected to independently read a minimum of three books per quarter. Analytic and expository writing assignments provide the main vehicle for the development of composition skills, although expressive writing is also explored. The focus on understanding and using the elements of argument underpins the writing of argument paragraphs, an argument essay, and a literary essay, supporting students in becoming more competent producers of argument in both written and spoken form. Informational reading and informational essay writing immerse students in how to critically read nonfiction, as well as analyze and use text structures, central ideas, and supporting details to craft informational text. Students also write a 4-5 minute speech for the Optimist Speech Competition; oral communication skills are advanced through the delivery of this speech. Vocabulary study includes direct instruction as well as application of proper usage of words in all their variant forms and the utilization of context clues to convey and interpret meaning. Grammar instruction is also directly taught and students are consistently held accountable for use of proper writing conventions throughout the year.

Placement in Advanced English 8-

Students are placed in this course through a set of placement criteria:

Eligibility for candidates is based on: NWEA score of 70th percentile or greater on Fall and Spring tests in 7th grade and English teacher recommendation. ***You will get a separate letter if you meet this criteria.***

English 8 - Year-Long

Over the course of eighth grade, students will continue to study literature of various genres, informational text, and further develop writing skills. This course follows a standard-based curriculum aligned to the Oakland County MAISA Units. Focused instruction deepens reading comprehension, analysis, and critical thinking skills. Writing to communicate ideas and information using conventional writing skills is woven throughout instruction in narrative, argument, and informational areas. Students will also express information orally and enhance understanding of presentation proficiency through strategic use of technology and speaking skills.

Algebra I - Year-Long

This algebra course covers the study of real numbers, solving equations, graphing of an equation on the coordinate plane, graphing parabolas, the study of exponents and radicals, solving systems of equations with two or more variables, and various operations within the study of quadratic equations. Students are placed in Algebra 1 upon successful completion of Advanced Math 7. Algebra I is a high school level course and meets the Algebra I graduation requirement; therefore, this course and the grade the student earns is included on the high school transcript and counts towards the student GPA.

Placement in Algebra I - Year-Long

Students are placed in this course through a set of placement criteria:

Eligibility for candidates is based on: NWEA score of 70th percentile or greater on Fall and Spring test in 7th grade and Math teacher recommendation. ***You will get a separate letter if you meet this criteria and you may need to do some independent studying over the summer to prepare for the class.***

Math 8 - Year-Long

Math 8 is a pre-algebra course designed for eighth-grade students. The course develops a deep conceptual and procedural understanding of mathematics in a moderately paced learning environment. The critical areas for Math 8 include: solving multi-step equations, exploration of transformations in the coordinate plane, triangles and other polygons, angle relationships given two parallel lines, graphing linear equations, solving systems of linear equations, functions, Pythagorean's theorem, the real number system, surface area and volume of solids, and exponents.

********Students or parents that have questions in regards to English or math placement for next year can be directed to the Counseling Office********

Science - Year-Long

The eighth grade curriculum is built with resources from MiStar and Project Lead the Way (STEM). Eighth-grade students will engage in scientific investigations that infuse engineering, math and technology throughout the year. Students will build a deep understanding of scientific concepts through collaboration, innovation, experimentation, and reasoning based on evidence. Eighth graders will be challenged to design solution based reasoning and model solutions to real world problems in the areas of environmental systems, climate change and sustainability, properties of waves, and natural hazards. Students will show their scientific understanding through investigation and dynamic scientific modeling. Emphasis will be placed on addressing real world phenomena, collaborative teams with students sharing their ideas, and defending their scientific arguments with evidence.

US History 8 - Year-Long

The purpose of this course is to develop the student's understanding of the heritage that shaped the United States as a democratic nation. United States history is surveyed from the founding of the United States to 1877 by looking at the political, economic, and social changes of our nation. The American Revolution, the formation of our national government, beginnings of the country, westward movement, the Industrial Revolution, and the Civil War and Reconstruction will be studied in detail. The course will periodically include the study of current events and U.S. foreign affairs. The study of American history will prepare students to become responsible citizens.

EXPLORATORY CLASSES

8th GRADE EXPLORATORY PROGRAM*

Students may take:

2 full year electives OR 1 full year elective + 2 semester electives OR 4 semester electives.

Every eighth-grade student will have 2 exploratory hours/classes in their schedule. In grade 8, they may take a full year of foreign language that will count as one of the two required years of high school requirements to graduate.

Art 8 - Semester-Long

This 8th grade class will develop students' skills in production, evaluation, judgment and art appreciation. We will look at examples in history to help us learn about creating art realistically, with expressive distortion and in abstraction. The materials we use may include: pencils, inks, pastels, various papers, clay, paper Mache, plaster, fibers, found objects, recycled materials and various glazes, stains and paints. In order to help cover some of the costs of the art materials, a lab fee/donation is requested. Students will own their work. We will apply the Elements and Principles of Design using a wide variety of techniques. Students' self-evaluation, quizzes, some homework, group critiques, displays and a final exam are included in the experience. 7th grade Art is NOT a prerequisite; however this is a more "advanced" class. Expect to fully participate in daily WORK; some homework is also required.

AMS Publications - Semester-Long

This elective course is for students who wish to learn about what's involved in creating a professional Yearbook publication. Students will learn how to work both individually and collectively to create a memorable, and authentic publication of all events this school year while representing the Avondale Middle School community. The class will cover topics such as Photojournalism, Caption Writing, Copyright Laws & Ethics, Interviewing/Reporting, Design, Layout, and Marketing. Students will also gain experience in team building exercises, communication skills, and how to create inclusive yearbook coverage.

Leadership - Semester-Long

This course is for students who desire to make a positive impact at AMS and beyond. Students will learn how to be a leader by leading collaborative projects and learning the foundational skills of leadership. This class is a project-based class where students collaborate on initiatives to implement Mustang MANIA and create a positive impact on the school or community. Students will learn individual and team-based leadership skills. Examples of steps in the collaborative process include writing a proposal, advertising, budgeting, research, and creating a timeline. Students MUST have the ability to work independently, and have a will to be of service to others.

Multi-Media - Semester-Long

This class will explore the world of film and video editing. Students will learn about filming techniques and the most effective way to tell a story in film. They will also receive comprehensive training in Adobe Premier video editing software and Soundbooth sound editing software. They will then use what they have learned to create how-to videos and a video commercial. These videos can be submitted for viewing on our weekly Mustang announcements. Students will also be able to learn about multiple ways to communicate and develop messages. There are a variety of written expression assignments required. Students must be focused and responsible as they contribute to individual and team-based projects.

Environmental Science - Semester-Long

In this course, students take on the challenge to educate the community about Earth's climate system. Students learn about Earth's greenhouse atmosphere and causes and impacts of natural climate changes in the past. They identify human activities that are responsible for contributing to current climate change, and what actions communities can take to mitigate the effects of global climate change.

Physical Education 8 - Semester-Long

Boys and girls participating in eighth-grade physical education will be challenged with a variety of fitness conditioning activities that will increase their muscular strength and endurance, flexibility, and cardiovascular endurance. Students will develop skills to be used to play a variety of team sports along with a basic understanding of team sport rules. Indoor and outdoor activities include; basketball, volleyball, soccer, speedball, floor hockey, softball and group games. Students will participate in fitness testing. Sportsmanship, teamwork and leadership are emphasized.

STEM 8 Medical Detectives -Semester-Long

In Medical Detectives, students will discover how health care professionals act as medical detectives to identify, treat and prevent illness in their patients. Students investigate body systems and how this information is processed. Medical Detectives analyze patients and data in community outbreak simulations. Students use observation and investigation skills learned throughout the course to solve the outbreak diagnosis for the community and report their findings.

STEM 8 Green Architecture -Semester-Long

Today's students have grown up in an age of "green" choices. In the Green Architecture unit, students learn how to apply this concept to the fields of architecture and construction by exploring dimensioning, measuring, and architectural sustainability as they design using 2D and 3D computer modeling. Students will conclude the course by building 3D models of their designs.

8th GRADE FULL YEAR EXPLORATORY COURSES

Year-long classes may not be dropped – this is a year-long commitment.

Students may only take Band OR Choir, not both.

Choir 8 - Year-Long

Placement in choir is based on beginning or intermediate, depending on previous experience. **Participation in all performances is mandatory.** This course is designed for students who have advanced musical skills in singing and music theory. Students must have experience in reading music and performing. Students will learn specific skills in the art of singing, proper posture, breath support and vowel placement. Choir members will be required to perform at the winter concert, spring concert, district, and state, pre-festival and festival performances. Concert Choir will travel at least once a year. Students are strongly encouraged to participate in Solo & Ensemble.

Band - Year-Long

We offer beginning, intermediate, and advanced band classes.

Beginning: In this class, students will learn music, basics pertaining to rhythm, tone, intonation, theory and terminology as well as instrument care and maintenance. This class will start from the most basic components of music, and no previous experience is required. Students will have the opportunity to learn how to play a wind instrument or percussion instrument. Students will start on one of the following instruments: flute, clarinet, alto saxophone, trumpet, trombone, baritone or percussion. Students who participate in band will need to rent or purchase a quality instrument. Enrollment in Band constitutes a commitment of the student to participate in all scheduled performances. This is a full-year class

Intermediate: Intermediate Band is a performing ensemble that will focus on intermediate-level skills, techniques, and concepts in music comprehension and performance, as well as preparation to participate in the Avondale High School Concert and Marching Bands. The prerequisite for this band is successful completion of Beginning Grade Band. Additional placements are determined by audition. This class will include at least four performances, including MSBOA District XVI Solo & Ensemble Festival. Participation at all performances is required.

Advanced: Advanced Band (Wind Ensemble) is a performing ensemble that will focus on advanced-level skills, techniques, and concepts in music comprehension and performance, as well as preparation to participate in the Avondale High School Concert and Marching Bands. The prerequisite for this band is

successful completion of Intermediate Band. Additional placements are determined by audition (If new to the district or band program). This class will include at least four performances, including MSBOA District XVI Solo & Ensemble Festival. **Participation at all performances is mandatory.**

Advanced Art-Year-Long (7th and 8th graders combined)

This class will develop students' skills in production, evaluation, judgment and art appreciation. We will look at examples in history to help us learn about creating art realistically, with expressive distortion and in abstraction. The materials we use may include: pencils, inks, pastels, various papers, clay, paper Mache, plaster, fibers, found objects, recycled materials and various glazes, stains and paints. We will apply the Elements and Principles of Design using a wide variety of techniques. **Prerequisites:** One semester of art in a previous year at AMS, art teacher recommendation, and hard work ethic. Expect to fully participate in daily WORK; some homework is also required.

World Language (French I, Spanish I, German I) - Year-Long

World Language 8th grade courses are full year. This is a high school level course that will earn graduation credit. Students will work toward proficiency in listening, speaking, reading and writing. The goal is to prepare students to interact independently in French, Spanish or German speaking countries. Students will also be introduced to the daily living and institutional cultures of their respective countries. Students will engage in a variety of activities to practice and promote language learning.

A limited number of students may take German I at Avondale High School. The number of seats available will be based on high school enrollment in this class. ***German class starts 30 minutes before AMS students begin their day. Students can get dropped off or take the high school bus to AHS. They will be bussed back to AMS prior to their 2nd hour.***

Please note: Due to staffing needs, no changes in course requests will be granted after May 1st.

You may contact the Avondale Middle School Counseling Department if you have any further questions:
Dave McMillan, 8th Grade Counselor, 248-537-6345 or david.mcmillan@avondaleschools.org