Course Description Handbook

2014-2015

Contact personnel

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The MMS Administration may make changes in courses offered, student schedules, class makeup, teacher assignments, campus rules, and student privileges as deemed necessary by the administration. Please realize this is a dynamic document that can change throughout the year as local and state rules and regulations change. It is important to know that this course description book includes all courses that are possible at McCarroll Middle School. However, due to enrollment and teacher availability, not every class will be offered every year.

McCarroll Middle School is an accredited middle school, which meets state requirements and provides broad academic experiences for all students. Students and parents should read thoroughly the information provided in this guide in order to select the best possible courses according to students’ needs, abilities, and career plans.

REGISTRATION
Registration: Registration will take place in the spring of each school year. Although students will receive specific instructions during that time from middle school personnel, the counseling staff is available to assist in making decisions related to course selections.

- There will be a parent and student information meeting before the opening of registration
- Students will have opportunity to fill out schedule request forms and meet with counselor before deadline
- Students that do not submit or complete a schedule request form will have their schedule arranged for them based upon their academic needs.

SCHEDULE CHANGES
Schedule Changes for Electives:
- Completed Schedule Change Request Form
- Parent teacher conference with teacher of class wanting to drop and form signed by both teachers and a parent.
- Must be returned before the 5th day of classes.

Schedule Changes for Pre-Advanced Placement or High School Credit Classes:
- Completed Schedule Change Request Form
- Parent teacher conference with teacher of class wanting to drop and form signed by both teachers and a parent.
- 3 weeks of tutorials
- Approval of administrator

Students may discuss changes to their 2014-2015 schedule with their counselor or Assistant Principal through August 15, 2014. After that time, after review by administrators, schedules will only be changed due to extraordinary circumstances. ALL requests for schedule changes will be automatically denied after the 5th day of classes.
ENROLLMENT
A student enrolling in the district for the first time must be accompanied by his/her parent(s) or legal guardian and must provide satisfactory evidence of required immunization, proof of residence (utility bill if within Decatur City Limits or verification form from Wise County Appraisal District if outside city limits but in DISD, or transfer approval from DISD Central Administration), and a withdrawal form from the previous school. To complete admission the following demographic information is necessary: birth certificate, social security card, home address and phone, mother’s name, employer, and work phone, father’s name, employer, and work phone, and emergency contact information. In addition, we must have on file a photocopy of at least one parent/guardian’s driver’s license. It is important to note that DISD no longer charges tuition for transfers. You may contact DISD Central Administration at 940.393.7100 if you are interested in transferring students to DISD.

COURSES
A. Required Courses
These courses are required to fulfill state educational guidelines. A course may or may not have a prerequisite; a prerequisite is a course that must be taken before the course under consideration.

B. Elective Courses
In addition to required state courses, students must choose other courses to complete their schedules. The number of electives varies from year to year.

C. Pre-AP/Advanced
McCarroll Middle School provides curriculum offerings for students with special talents and abilities. Pre advanced Placement classes are on-grade level academically advanced courses designed to challenge motivated students to understand rigorous content. The coursework requires students to engage in independent and analytical assignments. Students enrolled in Pre-AP should expect a faster class pace, more depth in classroom discussion, increased amount of reading, and overall greater academic expectations on assignments and time management. Many of these courses have summer assignments, which must be completed before school begins. Failure to complete those summer assignments will result in possible removal from the class.

D. GIFTED AND TALENTED – NJHS Information
Students who are identified as G/T have the option of enrolling in Pre AP and Advanced classes.
*** Students who plan on applying for the National Junior Honor Society as an 8th grade student, must have taken at least one Pre-AP or Advanced class as a 7th grade student.
E. CONTENT MASTERY PROGRAM
The content mastery program provides a comprehensive program for each student who has been identified as having a special need. Special needs include physical, mental, or emotional needs as well as learning disabilities. Consideration of a student’s need for special education services is initiated by a referral, which may be made by the parents, a physician, a community agency, and/or school personnel.
The program operates under state guidelines for admission, program content, and dismissal from the program. Students in content mastery earn course credit through regular education, or a combination of regular education and special education. Consult your counselor for more detailed information.

F. 504 SERVICES
A student who qualifies for 504 services is entitled to accommodations designed to remove barriers to academic instruction.

1. State Assessment
The STAAR test, evaluates student learning based on the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) - the state required standards. Students are tested in the areas of; 6th grade Math and Reading, 7th grade Math, Reading, and Writing, and 8th grade Math, Reading, Science, and Social Studies.
   • Student Success Initiative: By Texas State Law 8th graders must pass the STAAR Reading and Math test to advance to 9th grade.
   • Based on current or previous year’s performance, a student may be scheduled into a Reading or Math SSI intervention class.

2. Credit by Exam (Acceleration)
These exams provide a procedure for students who have command of a subject or course to earn credit without actually attending the class. Students taking the Acceleration Exam must not have had formal prior instruction.
Students must score 80% or above for the credit to be awarded. This grade is not used to determine class rank or GPA. Acceleration tests will be given two times a year. Students desiring to obtain credit by this method must contact counselors by the posted deadline and provide the cost of the exam (currently $40) to reserve their exam-testing slot. Once the student has completed the exam at the prescribed time, their deposit will be refunded in full to them. Failure to attend and complete the exam will result in forfeiture of the deposit. All CBE’s are ordered through Texas Tech University distance education for K-12.

3. EXPLORE
This test is designed to test the verbal, science reasoning and mathematical skills of students. It is the first of the tests in the ACT series. DISD students are administered this test during the Fall semester in the 8th grade. This gives students, teachers, and parents’ feedback regarding areas of strength, weakness and career preparedness. It is very important to carefully go over test results. This allows the student to focus on improvement in areas of weakness as well as enrichment in areas of strength. This test and the results of this test are key to ensuring that a student graduates from high school fully prepared for college.
4. SUMMER SCHOOL
6th, 7th, and 8th graders: Summer school is an option for students to make up failed courses or attendance days. 8th Graders: only Summer school is mandatory as part of the SSI program before the summer administration of the STAAR test. Also, there are some classes offered by Decatur High School for incoming freshman to receive accelerated credits. Summer school is dependent upon the number of students who register. Decatur students may attend summer classes offered at Decatur Independent School District or other accredited school districts to obtain credit; however, required courses taken in summer school do count in GPA.

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<th>Required Courses</th>
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6th GRADE
All sixth graders are required to take Reading/ELA, Math, Science, Social Studies, PE, and one elective.

7th GRADE
All seventh graders are required to take Reading, Writing/ELA, Math, Science, Texas History, PE or Athletics, and one elective.

8th GRADE
All eighth graders are required to take Reading/ELA, Math, Science, American History, Technology and 2.5 electives.
MCCARROLL MIDDLE SCHOOL
COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

All Pre-AP Advanced courses and requirements are addressed in the PRE-AP Advanced courses program guidelines in the addendums of this handbook.

Academic Courses

LANGUAGE ARTS

ELA  
6th, 7th, & 8th
The scope of English includes composition skills based on the emphasis of grammar, usage, and various audiences. Reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills are enhanced with the study of grammar, composition, and usage. Literature for this course includes short stories, novels, plays, nonfiction, and poetry.

Reading  
7th
Reading introduces a variety of literary forms, continues skill development in reading, and reinforces STAAR strategies. This course includes a study of short stories, biographies, novels, plays, and poetry.

MATHEMATICS

Math  
6th
Sixth grade mathematics focuses on students’ knowledge of numbers, number theory, computation, ratios, estimation, measurement, geometry, statistics, probability, patterns, and functions. Problem Solving strategies, communication, connections within and outside of mathematics, and reasoning are emphasized.

Math  
7th
Seventh grade Math is designed such that students will learn how to identify and apply mathematics to everyday experiences, to activities in and outside of school, and to other disciplines. This is achieved by the gaining of knowledge in number, operation, and quantitative reasoning, proportional reasoning, discovering pattern relationships, and developing the ability to think algebraically. This goal is further achieved through one’s understanding of geometry and spatial reasoning, probability and statistics, and measurement.
Math

8th grade Math integrates algebra, geometry, statistics, probability and mathematical reasoning. Students relate and apply algebraic reasoning to geometry, measurement, data analysis, probability and statistics. Problem Solving strategies, communication, connections within and outside of mathematics, and reasoning are emphasized.

SCIENCE

Science

6th Grade 6 Science is interdisciplinary in nature; however, much of the content focus is on physical science. Recurring themes are pervasive in sciences, mathematics, and technology. These ideas transcend disciplinary boundaries and include change and constancy, patterns, cycles, systems, models, and scale. The study of science includes conducting field and laboratory investigations using scientific methods, critical thinking, problem solving, and scientific instruments to collect and analyze information to explain a phenomenon. Students also use computers and information technology tools to support scientific investigations. Much of the course involves laboratory skills in which students draw logical inferences, predict outcomes, test their ideas, and formulate conclusions, helping students apply science to everyday life.

Science

7th Grade 7 Science is interdisciplinary in nature; however, much of the content focus is on organisms and the environment. Recurring themes are pervasive in sciences, mathematics, and technology. These ideas transcend disciplinary boundaries and include change and constancy, patterns, cycles, systems, models, and scale.

Science

8th Grade 8 Science is interdisciplinary in nature; however, much of the content focus is on earth and space science. Recurring themes are pervasive in sciences, mathematics, and technology. These ideas transcend disciplinary boundaries and include change and constancy, patterns, cycles, systems, models, and scale.

SOCIAL STUDIES

Social Studies

6th In this course students will study people, places, and societies of the contemporary world. Students will describe the influence of individuals and groups on historical and contemporary events in those societies and identify the location and geographic characteristics of various societies. Students will identify different ways in organizing economic and governmental systems.
Texas History 7th
This course provides coverage of all historical periods from settlement by Native Americans to recent developments of the 21st century. The text includes the study of the land, people, politics, and government of Texas.

U.S. History 8th
This course is a chronological history of the United States from its beginnings though the end of Reconstruction. The textbook covers the major periods and themes of American history up to 1877.

ATHLETICS

Athletics – Boys 7th & 8th
Prerequisite: Must meet set requirements to participate.
This course offers students an opportunity to participate in and improve skills in the games of football, basketball, cross-country, and track. Athletics may count as Physical Education credit in the 7th grade and is an elective in the 8th grade.
*** Please consider transportation issues. There could be athletic practices before and/or after school hours.

Athletics – Girls 7th & 8th
Prerequisite: Must meet set requirements to participate.
This course offers students an opportunity to participate in and improve skills in the games of volleyball, basketball, cross-country, and track. Athletics may count as Physical Education credit in the 7th grade and is an elective in the 8th grade.
***Please consider transportation issues. There could be athletic practices before and/or after school hours.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Physical Education 6th, 7th & 8th
The purpose of this course is to expose students to physical activities that can be continued throughout life. Students will learn the history and rules to several typical team and individual activities. They will also be involved in developing leadership skills and learning strategies for making good decisions. Grades are based on participation and dressing out for class activities.
FINE ARTS

Band 6th, 7th, & 8th
Prerequisite: (6th grade) Students will be placed by instrument based on results of 5th grade instrument test.
Prerequisite: (7th grade) Successful completion of at least 1 year of beginning band. 7th grade Band is a basic instrumental music class that is designed to help students with reading basic musical notation, rhythms, and tone production. The music literature used in this class is chosen at a level to assure continued success in all areas of music performance.
Prerequisite: (8th grade) Successful completion of at least 2 years of band. 8th grade Band students must have above average ability to perform and sight-read music; must have been in their top middle school band or top chair in their second band; must have consent of the band director. The music literature used in this class is chosen from the Primary Music List for the UIL band contest.

Choir 6th, 7th, & 8th
Beginning Choir 6th
Introduces students to choral music and sight-reading in order to prepare them for membership in the intermediate and advance choirs.
Choir 7th and 8th
Emphasis is on the development of vocal skills at the beginner level, basic theory and aural skills, and sight-reading and performance skills in a choral setting. Students are placed in choir by gender and experience level – Intermediate girls, Varsity girls, combined 7th and 8th boys’ choirs.

JOURNALISM/YEARBOOK 8th
This elective class for 8th graders only will be responsible for designing, producing and assembling the MMS annual yearbook. Students will be using available technology to create photo layouts, captions, dedication pages, club/organization pages, and class picture layouts. Students will be expected to show responsibility in regards to work and deadlines and to display ability to work with other students and adults. Before students can be enrolled in Yearbook, they are required to complete a questionnaire and interview with the teacher/advisor for the course.

Art 6th & 8th
This class combines formal lessons about art and culture with hands-on work in various media. Students will work in drawing, painting, and 3-D media while gaining a greater appreciation of how knowledge of history, language, math and science improve expression, art and creativity.
VOCATIONAL/TECHNOLOGY

Agriculture Science (one semester)
This comprehensive course is designed to introduce beginning students of agriculture to global agriculture and horticulture. The course includes agricultural career development, leadership, communication, cultural diversity, industry description, research, plant and animal science concepts, and mechanical systems.

Industrial Technology (one semester)
To be prepared for careers in agricultural power, structural, and technical systems, students need to attain academic skills and knowledge; acquire technical knowledge and skills related to power, structural, and technical agricultural systems and the industry; and develop knowledge and skills regarding career opportunities, entry requirements, industry certifications, and industry expectations. This course is designed to develop an understanding of agricultural mechanics as it relates to safety and skills in tool operation, carpentry, and metal working techniques.

STEM (semester)
STEM is an acronym for Science, Technology, Engineering and Math. The foundation of this course will be highly interactive group activities built around STEM concepts. Group activities may include Game Design, rocket building and launching, building and constructing bridges and houses, cooking, solar cars and other hands on activities. Each activity is designed to emphasize collaborative learning, critical and analytical thinking, creative thinking, problem solving and experimental design. Through participation in STEM course activities, students will practice many of the critical skills needed for 21st Century careers.

Technology Applications (one semester)
Technology Applications is a one-semester course for eighth graders. It is a hands-on class that provides an introduction to technology and computer application skills. Keyboarding, word-processing, databases, spreadsheets, iMovie, and web design are covered throughout the semester. Internet skills are taught also, along with saving documents and managing folders. This course will also give students an opportunity to explore careers in preparation for high school and post-secondary education. The students will use this information to select high school courses and endorsements.

Exploration Courses
This is offered only to 7th graders in a rotation of 6 six-week classes or a rotation of 3 twelve-week classes. It enables students a sampling of future elective classes and provides important information for future development. Any of the following classes may be offered: Introduction to Industrial Technology, Keyboarding, Introduction to Art, Leadership, Introduction to Spanish, Introduction to S.T.E.M. and other locally developed electives.
Advanced Pre-AP Courses

All Pre-AP Advance courses and requirements are addressed in the following PRE-AP Advanced courses program guidelines.

I. See the McCarroll Middle School Advanced Pre-AP Courses Program Guidelines
II. Pre-AP guideline and course invitations will be sent home in May.
Forms

I.  McCarroll Middle School Registration Form
II.  Schedule Change Request Form