



Course Description Guide 2021-2022

Perseverance Respect Integrity Discipline Excellence

Welcome to Liberty Middle School! At Liberty we strive to build an academic program that supports our mission to ensure the academic growth and safety of every student. The courses described in this booklet mirror this as well as the district mission to inspire every student to think, to learn, to achieve, and to care. Thank you for trusting us with the education of your child!

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Special Programs

Advanced Classes

Advanced classes are offered in Language Arts, Science and Social Studies. These classes utilize text and/or content that is one to two years ahead of grade level. The pace of the course is accelerated and the methods used are designed to prepare students with the skills necessary to be successful in Honors and Advanced Placement classes in high school. Students are screened for advanced classes using a body of evidence that may include standardized test scores, grades, a writing sample and teacher recommendation. For information on accelerated math classes, see the math course descriptions on page 5.

Student Achievement Services

Student Achievement Services (SAS) provides special education services to students who qualify under the Colorado Department of Education guidelines. SAS Staff include a department coordinator, learning specialists, a speech/language therapist, mental health support, nursing, and district support in the areas of hearing, vision, and fine and gross motor skills. This team assesses students who are referred and develops an Individual Education Plan (IEP) for students who qualify.

At Liberty Middle School, a continuum of academic support services is provided to accommodate each student's specific needs. This support may be in the form of co-taught literacy classes, math classes, or affective support classes. Each student's progress is monitored closely, and SAS staff collaborates with other teachers and families to ensure each student is as successful in the learning environment as he or she can be.

The SAS team also consults with other school staff and families regarding those students who do not qualify under the state guidelines.

Core Content Classes

Language Arts

This course emphasizes the fundamental language skills of reading, writing, speaking, listening, thinking, viewing and presenting. Our balanced literacy approach to teaching reading and writing allows students multiple opportunities to practice their language skills with a variety of texts and genres. Through the Reading Workshop Model, students will learn and practice comprehension and analysis of both fiction and non-fiction texts and engage in active questioning and discussion. Through the Writing Workshop Model, students will participate in the writing process in order to learn and practice critical writing skills including embedded grammar and vocabulary instruction. In Language Arts, students will read and write in a variety of styles, to a variety of audiences, and for a variety of purposes.

Science

At the middle school level, the principle goals in each science classroom are to cultivate scientific habits of mind, develop students' capability for scientific inquiry, and to teach each student how to reason in a scientific context. As students progress from 6th through 8th grade, every science teacher plans rigorous lessons and labs to ensure that students become proficient in the following fundamental scientific practices by the time they reach high school:

- Asking questions and defining problems
- Developing and using models
- Planning and carrying out investigations
- Analyzing and interpreting data
- Using mathematics and computational thinking
- Constructing explanations and designing solutions
- Engaging in argument from evidence
- Obtaining, evaluating, and communicating information

Our general curriculum follows the CCSD middle school curriculum, which is aligned with the Colorado State Content Standards.

Social Studies

Social Studies is guided by the state standards in history, geography, civics, economics, and personal financial literacy while focusing on the Western Hemisphere in 6th grade, the Eastern Hemisphere in 7th grade, and United States history in 8th grade. Students are engaged in technology, hands-on activities, and authentic assessments that make history come alive and help all students effectively acquire information, including analysis of primary and secondary sources, and synthesize data.

6th Grade

Geography:
Human and Physical
Ancient Civilizations:
Maya, Aztec, Inca
Conquest of the Americas
Colombian Exchange
Modern Americas:
Geography, Civics,
Economics

7th Grade

Ancient Civilizations:
Mesopotamia, Egypt, Greece,
Rome, African Kingdoms, China
Modern World:
Middle East, Africa, Asia
Economics:
Globalization, Cultural Diffusion,
Macro Economics, International
Organizations
World Religions

8th Grade

Revolution
Constitution
Westward Expansion
Civil War/Reconstruction

Mathematics

The mathematics program at Liberty Middle School focuses on preparing students to be able to do the following:

- learn to enjoy and value mathematics
- become confident in their abilities to learn mathematics
- become mathematical problem-solvers
- learn to reason and communicate mathematically
- make connections between mathematics and life

Liberty Middle School offers challenging mathematics courses at each grade level in order to meet the individual needs and abilities of our students.

Math 6

As students transition to middle school mathematics, they will build on their understanding of numbers from elementary school and begin to learn the abstract components of mathematics. In sixth grade, math content will focus on four critical areas, including (1) connecting ratio and rate to whole number multiplication and division and using concepts of ratio and rate to solve problems; (2) finishing understanding of division of fractions and extending the notion of numbers to the system of rational numbers, which includes negative numbers; (3) writing, interpreting, and using expressions and equations; and (4) developing understanding of statistical thinking. This work will lay the foundation for the focus on proportional relationships in seventh grade.

Math 6/7

Math 6/7 is part of a two-year compacted course sequence that provides three years of mathematics content in two years, preparing students for Algebra 1 in eighth grade. Math 6/7 students study all topics from Math 6 (see Math 6 course description), extending understanding of operations with rational numbers, working with expressions and linear equations and extending the concepts of ratio and rate from Math 6 to include proportional relationships from Math 7. The compacted nature of the course will require students to be comfortable and proficient learning math at an accelerated pace. Placement in Math 6/7 will be determined using a body of evidence to support students' readiness for success in this course.

Math 7

Seventh grade students will build on their work with rational numbers and algebraic thinking from sixth grade as they move into deeper and more complex math concepts. Math content will focus on four critical areas, including (1) developing understanding of and application of proportional relationships; (2) developing understanding of operations with rational numbers and working with expressions and linear equations; (3) solving problems involving geometric ideas of scale, area, surface area and volume with two- and three-dimensional shapes; and (4) drawing inferences about populations based on samples. This work will lay the foundation for the algebraic work with linear functions studied in eighth grade.

Math 7/8

Math 7/8 is the second half of a two-year compacted course sequence that provides three years of mathematics content in two years. Students who have successfully completed Math 6/7 will complete Math 7/8 in order to be prepared for Algebra 1 in eighth grade. Students will complete their study of Math 7 topics (see Math 7 course description) not covered in Math 6/7, including working with expressions and linear equations and the geometric study of two- and three-dimensional shapes. These concepts will be extended to the Math 8 topics of linear equations and the Pythagorean Theorem, respectively. The full content of Math 8 (see Math 8 course descriptions) will be studied in this course. The compacted nature of the course will require students to be comfortable and proficient learning math at an accelerated pace.

Math 8

In 8th grade, students begin a serious study of algebra with the learning of linear functions. With their study of number relatively complete, the focus shifts to the abstract application of their understanding of arithmetic. This content will focus on three critical areas, including (1) formulating and reasoning about expressions and equations, including modeling bivariate data with a linear equation, solving linear equations, and working with systems of linear equations; (2) developing and understanding the concept of a function, and using functions to describe quantitative relationships; and (3) analyzing two- and three-dimensional space and figures using distance, angle, similarity, and congruence, and understanding and applying the Pythagorean Theorem. This work will lay the foundation for success in a high school Algebra I course.

Algebra I

Algebra I provides a formal development of the algebraic skills and concepts necessary for students to succeed in advanced courses. In particular, the instructional program in this course provides for the use of algebraic skills in a wide range of problem-solving situations. Topics include: operations with real numbers, systems of linear equations and inequalities, relations and functions, polynomials, algebraic fractions, nonlinear equations, and statistics and probability. The course guides students in the development of critical thinking skills and algebraic problem solving skills which provide the foundation for real world problem solving. This is a fast pace rigorous course. The compacted nature of the course will require students to be comfortable and proficient learning math at an accelerated pace.

Electives

Full Year Courses:

A.V.I.D. (Advancement via Individual Determination)

A.V.I.D. is a semester elective class for 6th grade and year-long elective for 7th and 8th grades. Students will develop and reinforce attitudes, skills, and knowledge to successfully enter and complete a college prep academic program in high school.

Recommended Prerequisites:

- Between 2.0 and 3.5 GPA
- Average or above average standardized test scores
- Student application and interview for 7th & 8th grade
- High student motivation
- Positive attitude
- Desire to be in higher level classes
- Student/Parent contract

Major Goals:

Students will focus on the AVID curriculum and apply WICOR strategies into their core classes.

- Writing
- Inquiry
- Collaboration
- Organization
- Reading

Typical Activities:

- Cooperative group activities led by college tutors
- Student projects
- Reading and writing for understanding
- Listening and speaking activities
- Individual/group research
- Integration of supplemental readings
- Quick write
- Multimedia presentations (videos, slides, tapes, music)
- Binders/Agenda
- Cornell notes
- Tutorology

World Languages

Spanish IA

6th and 7th grades

This 6th or 7th grade course emphasizes communicative and proficiency-based activities for students in the target language. Students work through the first half of a textbook designed for a high school level I Spanish course. Along with a variety of other materials students will focus on cultural appreciation, listening comprehension, oral, reading and writing proficiencies. An important criterion for success in the Spanish classroom is a basic understanding of grammatical terms and rules in the English language.

Spanish IB

7th and 8th grades

This 7th or 8th grade course is a continuation of Spanish A. Students work through the second half of the high school level text started in Spanish A. Using a variety of materials, students will focus on cultural appreciation, listening comprehension, oral, reading and writing proficiencies. There is an increased emphasis on the Cherry Creek District World Language Proficiencies of listening, reading, writing, speaking, and culture. Completion of this course prepares students for Level II Spanish as an 8th or 9th grader.

Full Year Courses (cont.)

World Languages (cont.)

Spanish II

8th grade

This 8th grade course is the next level of Spanish after completing IA and IB. The content and pacing of this class is the same as a high school level two language class. Using a variety of materials, students will focus on communication and cultural proficiencies. There is an increased emphasis on the production of the language in the forms of reading, writing, listening and speaking. Completion of this course should prepare students for Level III Spanish as a 9th grader.

Spanish AB

8th grade

This 8th grade course is a combination of Spanish IA and Spanish IB. Students work through the course at the same pace as a high school level I Spanish class. Using a variety of materials, students will focus on cultural appreciation, listening comprehension, oral, reading and writing proficiencies. An important criterion for success in the Spanish classroom is a basic understanding of grammatical terms and rules in the English language. There is an increased emphasis on the Cherry Creek District World Language Proficiencies of listening, reading, writing, speaking, and culture. Completion of this course prepares students for Level II Spanish as a 9th grader.

Vocal Music

Select Choir (Liberty Bells)

7th and 8th grades

Students will continue to expand their choral knowledge through sight-reading, vocal technique, music theory, and performances. This course is designed to prepare students for high school choir as well as expose students to more difficult and varied repertoire. This group participates in four concerts throughout the year as well as other performance opportunities.

Band

6th, 7th and 8th grades

Development of the fundamental instrumental techniques and musical expressions is emphasized and practiced. Band instrumentation includes flute, oboe, clarinet, bass clarinet, alto saxophone, tenor saxophone, baritone saxophone, trumpet, French horn, trombone, baritone, tuba, and percussion (including bells). Information for rental/purchase of instruments will be given to students during class, with the possibility of an Instrumental Music rental night at the beginning of the school year. Concerts are scheduled throughout the year, primarily in the evening hours. Attendance is required for concerts and is included in the grading criteria.

Experience

Any level of experience or none at all
Any level of experience or none at all
Any level of experience or none at all

Course

Eagle Band (6th grade only)
Concert Band (7th grade only)
Symphonic Band (8th grade only)

Orchestra

6th, 7th and 8th grades

Development of the fundamental instrumental techniques and musical expressions is emphasized and practiced. Orchestra instrumentation includes violin, viola, cello, and bass. Information for rental/purchase of instruments will be given to students during class, with the possibility of an Instrumental Music rental night at the beginning of the school year. Concerts are scheduled throughout the year, primarily in the evening hours. Attendance is required for concerts and is included in the grading criteria.

Experience

Any level of experience or none at all.
Any level of experience or none at all.
Any level of experience or none at all.

Course

Eagle Orchestra (6th grade only)
Concert Orchestra (7th grade only)
Symphonic Orchestra (8th grade only)

Semester Courses:

Around the World

6th grade

In this course, we will explore the amazing cultural traditions that the Spanish speaking offer to the world. We will learn about and experience all aspects of culture including traditions, history, geography, holidays and special celebrations, food and drink, art, and most importantly, language. This course will provide an introduction to the Spanish language including basic concepts such as pronunciation, reading, writing, conversational words and phrases, and basic grammar topics such as verb usage. There is no prior Spanish knowledge required to choose this course, as we will be learning the basics during our journey.

Art

6th, 7th and 8th grades

Using a wide variety of media, this class focuses on developing both 2D and 3D art skills and techniques. Building on their knowledge and understanding from the previous year, students will learn visual art vocabulary for every medium studied. Additionally, in order to help students connect their work to the past, famous artists and the history of art are covered. A large part of this class is focused on planning and creating artwork that connects to the studied art vocabulary, processes, techniques and history of art in the unit. Students will observe, comprehend, and reflect upon different works of art as a tool to help them invent new ways to create art.

A.V.I.D. (Advancement via Individual Determination)

6th grade

A.V.I.D. is a semester elective class for 6th grade and year-long elective for 7th and 8th grades. Students will develop and reinforce attitudes, skills, and knowledge to successfully enter and complete a college prep academic program in high school. For more information, see the description on page 5.

Choir

6th grade

This course is designed to allow students to work together as musicians in a performing choral ensemble. Students will explore different styles and genres of vocal music, gain knowledge of elements of music theory, and learn the value of teamwork through rehearsals and singing. Students will perform with all of the other choirs for a performance toward the end of the semester.

Creative Writing

This course is designed to guide students in creative writing through experience in three genres: short story, poetry, and creative non-fiction. The course includes analysis of literary models (professional writings in each genre), individual and class criticism of work in a workshop mode, and lecture on and discussion of literary techniques in each genre. Students will keep a writer's notebook and a final writing project will be due at the end of the semester in a genre of the students' choice. This course encourages exploration and understanding of the human condition through writing. Students can request to take this course for both semesters with teacher approval and work on revising a longer piece for second semester.

Discovery/Project Based Learning

6th, 7th and 8th grades

This course is a student-driven, project-based class for students who are interested in discovering their gifts and want to be challenged. Students will learn about themselves as people, learners and global citizens as well as the importance of creative, innovative thinking and the design process. Students will create their own project by pursuing an area of interest and considering how they can help others and make an impact on the world. Students will also develop and strengthen their 21st Century Skills in:

- Communication and Collaboration
- Creativity and Innovation
- Critical Thinking and Problem Solving
- Information, Media, and Technology

Semester Courses (cont.)

Music Technology

7th and 8th grades

This is a non-performance semester long music class. We will discover how technology is used in the production of music, as well as explore how technology fits invisibly into the recording and production of non-electronic and electronic music. We will gain knowledge and understanding surrounding the legal and ethical issues of digital music creation, sharing, distribution and consumption. Students will have the opportunity to produce basic-level music technology projects such as Mash-ups and Podcasts.

Guitar

6th, 7th and 8th grades

This class is designed for the beginning guitar student. Students will learn proper technique, note reading, rhythmic skills, fingerboard geography, chords, musical style and interpretation. The end result of this class will inspire students to continue further study independently or seek private instruction. The knowledge gained in this class will set the foundation for individuals to be able to perform, read, and create music independently in the future. A class fee of \$10 is required for school guitar use and personal method book.

Health and Wellness

6th, 7th and 8th grades

Health & Wellness 6 &7

Students will develop skills necessary to become more responsible, self-reliant adolescents. They will learn the power and responsibility of making good choices and focus on modeling and promoting a healthy lifestyle. We will cover topics such as nutrition, physical activity, study habits and organization, peer relationships, conflict resolution, appropriate technology and internet usage, and effective communication skills.

Health & Wellness 8

8th Grade Health and Wellness will focus on the skills and knowledge needed to become an independent and informed high schooler. Class content will center on topics such as lifetime fitness and nutrition, communicable and non-communicable diseases and prevention, first aid and emergency preparedness, navigating teenage relationships, positive social media usage, and substance abuse and prevention

Photography

6th, 7th and 8th grades

This class will incorporate studies of the history, techniques, aesthetics, and practices of digital photography. Students will develop their visual thinking skills as they acquire an understanding of the principles and elements of art with an in-depth focus on composition and lighting. This is an introductory course which will cover not only the use of a digital camera but also the minor editing and manipulating of images to create fine art photographic prints.

Physical Education

6th, 7th and 8th grades

Physical Education 6

This course focuses on physical fitness, health, and lifelong sports. Students develop skills and understand rules and regulations as they participate in challenging games and team sports. During the semester, students also develop skills necessary to become responsible and self-reliant. They will learn the positive consequences for making healthy choices. Students may choose between fall or spring PE, if they would like year-round PE, they can choose both. Year round PE enrollment will depend on space available.

Physical Education 7

This course focuses on individual and team sports concepts as well as overall wellness. Students expend their energy in challenging games and understand rules and regulations related to exciting team sports on a daily basis. Students may choose between fall or spring PE, if they would like year-round PE, they can choose both. Year round PE enrollment will depend on space available.

Physical Education 8

This course is designed to help students realize a healthy lifestyle by emphasizing physical fitness, team sports, and group activities. Team sports align with seasonal sports. Students participate in activities that focus on the development of individual sports, skills and interests, and on issues dealing with being a lifelong learner and a physically active individual. Students may choose between fall or spring PE, if they would like year-round PE, they can choose both. Year round PE enrollment will depend on space available.

Technology and S.T.E.M.

Engineering Technology

6th grade

During this semester-long course, students will explore topics & careers in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM). Students will design, build, and test their own physical & digital creations. Project topics include: Engineering (Civil, Environmental, Electrical, and Mechanical), Architecture, and Programming (Robotics). Students will use physical and digital tools such as LEGO Robotics, 3D printing, and Computer-Aided Design Software.

STEAM Explorations

7th grade

Students will learn and actively use the Engineering Design Process to bring their designs to life. From fabrication tools to CAD and 3D printing, students are exposed to basic software, tools, and equipment found at the foundation of any CTE STEM pathway. Students will utilize design software (SketchUp), Arduinos, coding, and other tools to manufacture new products. The course will end with students using all course skills to collaboratively create a final project.

Tech Design and Engineering

8th grade

During this semester-long course, students will explore topics & careers in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM). Students will design, build, and test their own physical & digital creations. Project topics include: Engineering (Biomedical, Civil, Environmental, Electrical, and Mechanical), Architecture, and Programming (Robotics). Students will use physical and digital tools such as LEGO Robotics, 3D printing, Computer-Aided Design Software, and Arduino circuitry. This class is encouraged for students wanting to take Engineering or Robotics courses at Grandview.

Digital and Multimedia Production

6th, 7th and 8th grades

Multimedia production is a multi-level (beginner-advanced) project-oriented course, which allows students to communicate their unique perspectives using a variety of technological tools including professional grade software from the Adobe Creative Cloud Suite. Throughout this course, students will develop critical thinking skills while producing and contributing to the school's video announcements and yearbook.

Semester Courses (cont.)

Theater Arts

6th, 7th and 8th grades

Students engage in the creation, production, and performance of drama. Basic stage directions, theater terminology and aspects of technical theater are integrated into the course. Through scene work and improvisation, students practice speaking in front of an audience, collaborating with others and creating characters.

Theater Arts 6

Students will explore storytelling through theatre with units on ensemble work, staging elements, pantomime, improvisation, the fundamentals of script work, as well as original scene devising. Students will learn about how to create, maintain and truthfully communicate a character during a performance. Students will also learn how to provide and receive instructor and peer feedback in order to implement it into their work.

Theater Arts 7

Students will deepen their understanding of theatre with units on scene devising through genres such as Soap Operas, Sitcoms, and Melodramas, as well as dive into more rigorous script work. While producing those scenes, students will learn how to identify a character's objective, obstacle, motive, and subtext. They will also explore improvisational theater, scene analysis, and critical responses to theatrical work.

Theater Arts 8

Students will perform and devise longer comedy scenes and dramatic scenes within multiple genres. Students will also dive deeper into the most exercised methods of character analysis. They will also learn about the various aspects of and roles embedded within a theatrical production including Dramaturgy. Students continue practicing improvisation and tackle audition skills to prepare them for high school theatre.