

Eastern Middle School



2026-2027

7th & 8th Grade Course Description Guide

Eastern Middle School
2200 Pettis Ave
Ada, Michigan 49301
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Dear Seventh and Eighth Grade Families:

We believe that middle school is an important time of transition for students. We recognize the unique physical, social, emotional, intellectual needs and qualities of students in this age group. In order to support student growth, a middle school curriculum must be authentic, engaging, rigorous, and developmentally responsive to their needs. The school culture must provide a supportive environment where students are empowered to gain the knowledge, skills, and competencies foundational for success in life. Our caring and responsive staff is committed to encouraging students' growing independence.

In seventh and eighth grade, our students will continue to benefit from a rigorous core curriculum aligned with the Michigan Academic Standards and benchmarks in language arts, math, science, and social studies, combined with an interesting variety of exploratory opportunities. Counseling and support services also continue to be a part of our comprehensive whole-child approach to education.

Historical results of both the Michigan State Test of Educational Progress (M-STEP) and PSAT 8/9 demonstrate that Forest Hills Public Schools consistently ranks among the highest-scoring districts in the state of Michigan. When measuring our success, however, we do not simply look at one data set. We value the quality of relationships and interactions we have every day with our students, their families, and staff. We model respect and understanding for each other. We invite the active involvement and participation of our students' families as learning partners in the educational experience.

This guide serves as a planning tool as you and your child consider seventh- and eighth-grade learning opportunities. As an important aspect to planning for their secondary education, each student will develop an Educational Development Plan (EDP) related to their future career and education goals after high school. In order to help you better understand the Michigan Merit Curriculum and related requirements, we have provided an additional section in our course description guide starting on page 4.

For all students, our counseling staff is available to support students in selecting and scheduling the appropriate courses. We look forward to working with you and your child as we plan together for a successful school year ahead.

Sincerely,

Jeff Simon
Central MS

Kristine Yelding
Eastern MS

David Simpson, Ph.D.
Northern Hills MS

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Educational Development Plans (EDP)

The Michigan Merit Curriculum (MMC) legislation states, “each pupil in grade 7 is provided with the opportunity to develop an educational development plan, and that each pupil has developed an educational development plan before he or she begins high school. An educational development plan shall be developed by the pupil under the supervision of the pupil’s school counselor or another designee qualified to act in a counseling role under section 1233 or 1233a selected by the high school principal and shall be based on a career pathways program or similar career exploration program.” (MCL 380.1278a)

The EDP is a secondary/post-secondary planning tool that directs the educational plan and career planning activities schedule for the final six years of a student’s K-12 learning career. In their EDP, students identify a career pathway and write employment, education, and training goals. They also identify a course of study (the credits that will be taken) intended to provide the skills and competencies needed to be successful in the next steps after high school. EDP’s are “living” documents that are updated as students’ age and their interests and abilities become more obvious and focused. It is recommended that the EDP be updated at least annually in conjunction with other planning activities designed to support student achievement. (MDE MMC Guidelines v.12.07)

Forest Hills students begin planning for their EDP in seventh grade during classroom guidance. Students are introduced to a web-based career and post-secondary exploration program called **Naviance**. Students are issued an individual login so they may access the program from home as well as at school. Students complete state requirements for the EDP during eighth grade.

Virtual Learning

All traditional/seated courses listed in this course catalog are allowed to be adapted for delivery in a virtual or blended format by Forest Hills Public Schools.

Student Schedule Examples (more possibilities exist)

All students will have 4 core and 2-4 elective classes depending on their preferences.

Core classes will be automatically scheduled.

Electives are 1 Semester (S) or Year-long/2 semesters (Y).

Example 1

<u>4 core classes</u>		<u>Electives</u>
Language Arts		Elective (Y)
Math	+	Elective (S)
Science		
Social Studies		Elective (S)

Example 2

<u>4 core classes</u>		<u>Electives</u>
Language Arts		Elective (S)
Math	+	Elective (S)
Science		Elective (S)
Social Studies		Elective (S)

Example 3

<u>4 core classes</u>		<u>Electives</u>
Language Arts		Elective (Y)
Math		
Science	+	Elective (Y)
Social Studies		

CORE CLASSES

English Language Arts (2 Semesters)

English Language Arts 7 – Full Year Course In the seventh grade, students are exposed to a variety of selections in literature (e.g., mystery, poetry, drama, mythology, legends, etc.), as well as outside readings. Students develop reading and writing strategies, academic vocabulary, spelling skills, and speaking and listening skills. Understanding thematic units and thesis support writings are a focus at this grade level. English Language Arts 7 involves a learning environment that creates opportunities for all students to go deep into the FHPS Literacy Framework while connecting to the real world.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS 8 (2 Semesters)

English Language Arts 8 – Full Year Course In the eighth grade, a continued development of composition skills occurs with an emphasis on writing from selected topics. Speaking, listening, grammar, writing, and reading comprehension are strongly emphasized. Extended learning in poetry, short stories, and dramatic techniques through selected topics in literature are three major units of study. Additionally, students will expand their research skills to develop sound, informative and argumentative skills. English Language Arts 8 involves a learning environment that creates opportunities for all students to go deep into the FHPS Literacy Framework while connecting to the real world.

Mathematics

MATH 7 (2 Semesters)

Math 7 develops mathematical concepts and skills in four important mathematical strands: Number and Operations, Geometry and Measurement, Data Analysis and Probability, and Algebra and Functions. Students will engage in a research-based, problem-centered learning environment to develop proficiency in both mathematical reasoning and communication. The majority of FHPS students take Math 7, preparing for Math 8 in 8th grade and Algebra 1 in high school.

MATH 8 (2 Semesters)

Math 8 develops mathematical concepts and skills in major areas of study that include: the Number System, Expressions and Equations, Functions, Geometry, and Statistics and Probability. Students will engage in a research-based, problem-centered learning environment to develop proficiency in both mathematical reasoning and communication.

MATH 7/8 (2 Semesters)

Math 7/8 is an accelerated course that combines the standards from Math 7 and Math 8 and prepares students for Algebra 1 in 8th grade. This class is geared toward students who are willing to engage and exhibit high levels of commitment, achievement, and a passion for math. Students who qualify for Math 7/8 should have excellent study skills and the time to devote to a significantly higher workload in math outside of school. For both semesters, **a minimum of a 83% final grade must be maintained to remain in the Math 7/8 class or advance to Algebra 1.**

ALGEBRA I (2 Semesters)

Prerequisite: Demonstrated proficiency in Math 7/8 standards

Algebra 1 in 8th grade is an accelerated math course that provides credit for high school Algebra 1. This course covers the high school Algebra 1 standards: linear, quadratic, radical, absolute value, and exponential functions, and their applications. Methods for solving equations, inequalities, and systems will be emphasized. Since this course is part of our two-year acceleration at middle school, students will go deeper into the Algebra 1 standards than in a traditional Algebra 1 course.

Students who take Algebra 1 in 8th grade should have excellent study skills and the time to devote to a significantly higher workload in math outside of school. **A minimum grade of B should be maintained to continue in the accelerated math sequence. Students earning below a B may be recommended to retake the course, as Algebra 1 provides the foundation for success in future math classes.**

Students who complete this course will be eligible to take the Advanced Placement Calculus or the Advanced Placement Statistics course during their senior year of high school. **Also, upon successful completion of Algebra 1, the letter grade earned and the credit will be recorded on the student's permanent high school transcript and applied to high school graduation requirements.**

Science

SCIENCE 7 (2 Semesters)

The Science 7 course is based on student-driven questions and discoveries based on the NGSS structure. Students are involved in numerous hands-on labs and group discussions. The main units include chemistry: identifying substances based on properties, physics: manipulating the transfer of forces, body systems: distinguishing cells and systems, and weather: measuring and predicting patterns.

SCIENCE 8 (2 Semesters)

The Science 8 course includes units in physics, chemistry, life science, and Earth science. The units of study are the science and engineering practices, how the Earth is changing, why organisms look the way that they do, how things move, and how food provides our bodies with energy. Students will experience phenomena, investigate questions, and participate in collaborative investigations to solve relevant problems.

Social Studies

WORLD HISTORY 7 (2 Semesters)

Social Studies 7 encompasses World History from the beginnings of human society through 1750 C.E. Students will learn geographic, environmental, biological, and cultural processes that influenced the rise of the earliest human communities, the migration and spread of people throughout the world, and the causes and consequences of the growth of agriculture. Students will discover the innovations and social, political, and economic changes that occurred through the emergence of classical civilizations in Africa and Eurasia, and their impact on our world today.

US HISTORY 8 (2 Semesters)

US History 8 encompasses major themes of the 18th and 19th centuries in American History. Students will learn about the fight for independence from Britain and the forging of a new nation. Moving into the 19th century, students will investigate the underlying causes and results of westward expansion, and its consequences for American Indians and enslaved African Americans. Students will also study reform movements such as abolition and women's suffrage, sectional tensions that contributed to the Civil War, and the successes and failures of Reconstruction.

ELECTIVES

Elective course offerings are dependent on student interest, staffing, and configuration within the Master Schedule.

Academic Enhancement

ENHANCEMENT 7/8 (1 or 2 Semesters)

For students who systematically need assistance in achieving academic success, this course provides teacher-directed support with core subject learning. **Collaborative discussions with family, teachers, counselors, and/or administrators occur in order to place students into this course.**

Citizenship/Leadership

PEER TO PEER (1 Semester, 7th and 8th grades - Character Reference and Student Statement from EMS Staff Member required)

Peer to peer support programs increase opportunities for students with Autism Spectrum Disorder to access general education settings and curriculum. Peers model typical academic and social behavior in educational environments throughout the school day and provide support for students with ASD to promote independence and socialization. Peer to peer support programs and inclusion of students with ASD not only affects outcomes for the students with ASD, but can also impact a number of outcomes for typical peers and at-risk students.

LEADERSHIP: (1 Semester, 8th Grade)

This course is designed to help you discover and develop your talents as a leader. Everyone has the potential to lead, and every day provides you with opportunities and possibilities to lead. You will learn about leadership by getting involved in team-building activities, taking a look at helpful habits, engaging in group discussions, meeting a variety of leaders from the community, setting goals to act, and reflecting on your learning. As you learn leadership by connecting it to everyday life, you will gain greater confidence in your potential and your abilities. Fun and engaging lessons will help you improve skills to become an effective leader in school and your community.

Music

All members of the EMS music department are expected to wear a white tuxedo shirt (can be ordered from the school), black pants, black shoes, black socks, cummerbund, and bow tie for all performances. The school will supply the cummerbund and bow tie. Families requiring financial assistance should contact a school administrator.

BAND 7 (2 Semesters)

Recommended Prerequisite: Demonstrated proficiency in Band 6 and/or one year of study on the instrument that he/she is planning to play in Band 7.

A variety of band literature is studied and performed. Practice at home and attendance at all performances are expected. The bands perform several concerts throughout the year and may attend music festivals. Additional opportunities exist through solo and ensemble festivals. ***Students are scheduled into this course for the entire year.***

BAND 8 (2 Semesters)

Prerequisite: Demonstrated proficiency in Band 7.

This course is for students who have completed two previous years of band. Students new to Forest Hills should contact the school office to determine appropriate placement. A variety of band literature is studied and performed. Practice at home and attendance at all performances is expected. The Band performs several concerts throughout the year and may attend music festivals. Additional opportunities exist for participation in solo and ensemble festivals. ***Students are scheduled into this course for the entire year.***

CHOIR 7 (2 Semesters)

Choir students will develop the ability to sing with good tone and diction, to sing and read parts, to learn to read music, and to develop a greater understanding of music. Activities include sight-reading exercises, daily choral rehearsals, and performances. All students learn the basics of music theory, music history, sight-reading, and proper vocal production. Several concerts are given each year. Performance demeanor, responsibility to the group, and teamwork are stressed. Attendance at all performances is expected. ***Students are scheduled into this course for the entire year.***

CHOIR 8 (2 Semesters)

Choir students will develop the ability to sing with good tone and diction, to sing and read parts, to learn to read music, and to develop a greater understanding of music. Activities include sight-reading exercises, daily choral rehearsals, and performances. All students learn the basics of music theory, music history, sight-reading, and proper vocal production. Several concerts are given each year. Performance demeanor, responsibility to the group, and teamwork are stressed. Attendance at all performances is expected. ***Students are scheduled into this course for the entire year.***

ORCHESTRA 7 (2 Semesters)

Recommended Prerequisite: Demonstrated proficiency in Orchestra 6 and/or one year of study on the instrument that he/she is planning to play in Orchestra 7. A variety of orchestra literature is studied and performed. Practice at home and attendance at all performances are expected. The orchestras perform several concerts throughout the year and may

attend music festivals. Emphasis is placed on gaining technical skill through performance of different types of literature, and on music theory as it relates to string playing. ***Students are scheduled into this course for the entire year.***

ORCHESTRA 8 (2 Semesters)

Recommended Prerequisite: Demonstrated proficiency in Orchestra 7.

A variety of orchestra literature is studied and performed. Practice at home and attendance at all performances are expected. The orchestras perform several concerts throughout the year and may attend music festivals. Emphasis is placed on refining and improving an individual's music skills to a higher degree of proficiency. A variety of orchestral literature is studied and performed. ***Students are scheduled into this course for the entire year.***

Physical Education

PHYSICAL EDUCATION (1 or 2 Semesters, 7th and 8th grades)

The physical education curriculum focuses on recreational/life-long activities, individual, and group sports. The program's activities encourage physical fitness, student responsibility, self-discipline, respect for self and others, and cooperation.

It is highly recommended by the State of Michigan and Forest Hills Public Schools to take one semester of P.E. at some point during seventh or eighth grade. However, you may also elect to take P.E. more than once.

STRENGTH & CONDITIONING (1 semester, 8th grade)

This course focuses primarily on a structured routine of weight training, stretching, and plyometrics while teaching students the proper form, discipline, and intensity of workouts necessary to improve their level of physical fitness.

Individual programs will be offered to accommodate students of various abilities and interest levels within the same class.

HEALTH (1 semester, 8th grade)-- Course offering is subject to availability. If offered, preference would be provided to students who are not currently enrolled in more than 1 high school accredited courses.

Health in 8th grade is a course that provides credit for high school Health. Students will explore units that meet the State of Michigan Health Standards. Throughout these units, emphasis is placed on the avoidance of risky behaviors, positive self-image, refusal skills, and knowledge of responsibilities and laws. Units will include: types of health (mental, physical, social/emotional), foods and fitness, alcohol, tobacco, and drugs, healthy relationships, communicable and non-communicable diseases, HIV/STIs, reproductive system, pregnancy (abstinence-based), CPR and First Aid.

Upon successfully completing Health, the credit will be recorded on the student's high school transcript and applied to high school graduation requirements

Special Education

ACADEMIC STRATEGIES (1 or 2 Semesters, 7th and 8th grades)

Placement is based on students' Individualized Education Program (IEP) requirements.

This course is designed to assist students in increasing the development of academic skills and meeting IEP goals and objectives. Focus areas include: instructional support; time management, organization, and self-advocacy skills; and accommodations per students' IEPs. Students will be graded CR or NC for this course.

Project Based Learning

ART (1 Semester, 7th and 8th grades)

Students will find their creative self with a class designed to explore a variety of methods and materials in art. Students will have the opportunity to create unique art forms using paints, pastels, drawing pencils, markers, and sculptural materials. Explore cultural art, famous artists, cartooning, and graphic design along with a variety of art styles and techniques.

CLAY & SCULPTURE (1 Semester, 7th and 8th grades)

In this class, clay and its many possibilities will be explored. Several hand-building methods and glazing techniques will be presented. Both functional and nonfunctional pieces will be encouraged. Sculpture and design in materials other than clay will also form a portion of the course.

CREATIVE WRITING (1 Semester, 7th and 8th grades)

This semester-long elective is an introduction to creative writing for the middle school level. Our units of study will include a variety of writing options such as tall tales, fantasy, writing reviews, poetry, nonfiction, and other fun-filled writing activities. Each day will begin with a six minute writing prompt to build stamina and encourage creativity. Students will learn the importance of words and adding description, the power of a story, and emphasize the impact of reading and journaling in and out of the classroom. The course will end with a writing reflection.

DRAMA (1 Semester, 7th and 8th grades)

This class is an exploration of drama/theater and includes music, videos, games, technology, and projects to provide a foundation to prepare students for high school drama. Students will participate in many forms of drama such as storytelling, characterization, improvisation, skits, monologues, interpretive reading, and plays. Acting techniques are taught through creative interactions with classmates.

DIGITAL ART (1 Semester, 7th and 8th grades)

This class provides an opportunity for students to dive into a variety of creative experiences through creating art digitally. You will learn the basics of **digital photography**, including composition, lighting, camera types, and camera settings. Other techniques such as **Stop Motion Animation** will also be covered. You will learn to use **Adobe Photoshop**, a layered photo-editing program, as you manipulate and modify your photographs and art work.

OUTDOOR EXPLORATION (1 Semester, 7th and 8th grades)

This activity-based class will take students out into the natural areas surrounding the school to engage in a variety of studies. Topics include but are not limited to survival skills, habitat and wildlife, wild edible plants, and compass work. Plan to spend time in the woods and in the fields - as well as in the classroom - as students learn about the natural environment and our interactions with it. This course is intended for students who have a real interest in being outside. ***Weather during the winter months could impact daily activities.***

PLTW: FLIGHT & SPACE (1 Semester, 7th and 8th grades)

The exciting world of aerospace comes alive through the Flight and Space unit. Students become engineers as they design, prototype, and test models to learn about the science of flight and what it takes to travel and live in space. You'll be analyzing and solving real world real-world aviation challenges, taking a close look at the complications of space travel, and planning a mission to Mars.

PLTW: MEDICAL DETECTIVES (1 Semester, 7th and 8th grades)

In Medical Detectives, students play the role of real-life medical detectives as they collect and analyze medical data to diagnose disease. This class is divided into three units: Disease Detectives, Mysteries of the Human Body, and Outbreak! Students will solve medical mysteries in all three units by engaging in hands-on projects and labs including: collecting vital signs, growing bacteria, and participating in a sheep brain dissection.

PLTW: GREEN ARCHITECTURE (1 Semester, 7th and 8th grades)

Today's students have grown up in an age of "green" choices. In this unit, students learn how to apply this concept to the fields of architecture and construction by exploring dimensioning, measuring, and architectural sustainability. You'll be using math concepts to create your own blueprints and making realistic models of the architectural world around you, analyzing how to make buildings 'greener' and creating a sustainable 'tiny house'.

GAMES & STRATEGIES FOR CRITICAL THINKING (1 Semester, 7th and 8th grades)

This engaging elective explores the power of games as tools for developing critical thinking, problem-solving, and strategic decision-making skills. Students will analyze and apply strategic thinking across various game formats, from classic board games like Chess and Catan to cooperative challenges like Pandemic and Forbidden Island. Through hands-on gameplay, discussions, and reflection, students will learn the principles of risk management, negotiation, teamwork, and adaptability. The course concludes with a student-designed game project and a final tournament, allowing students to test their skills in a fun and collaborative environment.

YEARBOOK (2 Semesters, 7th and 8th grades) - Character Reference and Student Statement Required

The main focus is the publication of our EMS yearbook. Page design, layout, photography, copywriting, sale, and distribution are some of the components of yearbook publication. Students should have strong writing skills and be able to work independently. Some time commitment outside of the scheduled class period (before and after school) is also expected.

World Language

INTRO TO SPANISH (1 Semester, 7th and 8th grades)

This one semester course bridges students' previous World Language exposure to a future high school Spanish experience. Students will engage in reading, speaking, listening, and writing in Spanish. Students will also participate in activities, games, songs, and utilize technology to enhance their skills.

SPANISH 1 (2 Semesters, 8th grade)

This course is equivalent to high school Spanish 1. During the first year of daily Spanish class, students will experience the cultures of Spanish-speaking people both abroad and in the US. Students will develop skills in listening, speaking, reading and writing, as well as study common vocabulary and grammar patterns. The *Realidades* series that we use offers many varied opportunities for students to practice all aspects of language acquisition through audio, video, CD, text and workbook components. This class is very important in forming a strong base for future study in the language. **Eighth**

grade students who have selected Spanish I will have the credit earned for the class reflected on their high school transcript and applied toward the high school graduation requirements.

EARNING HIGH SCHOOL CREDIT (MCL 380.1278)

The Michigan Merit Curriculum lays out a new foundation for “credit” by requiring that credit be awarded not by the commonly used Carnegie unit, which is based on seat time, but based on a student’s demonstration that he or she has successfully met the content expectations for the credit area.

A credit is a completed unit of study as measured by proficiency in a predetermined set of content expectations (e.g., Algebra I, Biology). Students earn credit – students take a course.

Students may earn credit if they successfully demonstrate mastery of subject area content expectations or guidelines for the credit. The assignment of credit must be based, at least in part, on student performance on subject area assessments, which measure the extent to which they meet the credit expectations and guidelines. Credit can be granted in a variety of ways (e.g., end-of-course exams with a passing score; dual enrollment; testing out with a minimum score of 77% per state law; accelerated, honors, and/or advanced placement (AP) courses; summer school makeup classes).

Middle school students who successfully complete one or more high school credits before entering high school and meet the same expectations and proficiency level as high school students will receive high school graduation credit.

Once a student registers for and attends a class, he or she agrees to the district’s requirements for earning a grade in the class, including attendance, homework, etc. However, the district must grant credit if a student passes an end of course exam, which the district has determined measures a student’s proficiency in meeting the Michigan Merit course/credit content expectations.

A student will not be granted more than 1 credit per course for a course/credit area required under the Michigan Merit Curriculum, with the exception of Algebra II, which the law explicitly allows to be delivered over two years.

If a student fails a required course for graduation, credit is not granted and the class must be made up. Since there is little room in a student’s schedule each year for makeup classes, the failed credit can be recovered in various ways.

Courses taken in middle school for high school credit may affect the student’s high school G.P.A. but may not be accepted for credit by some post-secondary institutions. It is recommended that college choices be researched on this topic for clarification prior to enrollment.

NOTICE OF NONDISCRIMINATION POLICY

It is the policy of the Forest Hills Public School District that no person shall on the basis of race, age, color, religion, national origin, sex or handicap be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program of the District, including employment.

Any questions concerning Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972, including athletic issues, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex, or inquiries related to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of handicap, should be directed to:

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