2019-20 MIDDLE SCHOOL ELECTIVES (TENTATIVE)

Students in Grade 6 will choose one elective course and Grades 7 and 8 will choose two electives. Every effort is made to try to place students in their first choice, but as popular electives fill quickly, some students will be placed in alternative courses. Courses are subject to change based on student requests and staffing.

Art Production: Grades 6-8
This yearlong course is designed for beginning art students. It follows the California State Framework for Visual Arts and Common Core Standards. We will focus on art elements and principles as they relate to four components of art education: artistic perception, creative expression, historical and cultural context, and aesthetic valuing. Creative thinking, problem solving, and skill acquisition are stressed in all assignments. Projects will be in a variety of media, and will be both two and three-dimensional. Student success will depend on full participation in class activities, adherence to project requirements, and quality of execution.

Beginning Strings: Grades 6-8, No previous musical knowledge or experience is necessary
This yearlong course provides instruction in the basics of playing a string instrument and reading music. The acquisition and development of the physical skills necessary for instrumental performance is emphasized. Successful completion of this course qualifies the student to move on to Beginning Orchestra. Instruments include violin, viola, cell, and bass. This is not a guitar class.

Beginning Winds: Grades 6-8, No previous musical knowledge or experience is necessary
This course provides instruction in the basics of playing a band instrument and reading music. The acquisition and development of the physical skills necessary for instrumental performance is emphasized. Successful completion of this course qualifies the student to move on to Beginning Band. Instruments include flute, oboe, clarinet, bass clarinet, bassoon, alto, tenor, and baritone saxophone, trumpet, French horn, trombone, tuba, and percussion.

Beginning Orchestra: Grades 6-12, 1-2 years of previous experience with the same instrument
This yearlong course emphasizes the continuing development of the technique and expression of the string player. Music is selected from a wide range of periods and styles to give the student the broadest musical and cultural experience.

Beginning Band: Grades 6-12, 1-2 years of previous experience with the same instrument
This yearlong course provides continuing development of the technique and expression for the concert band instrument. Music is selected to give the student the widest range of musical and cultural experiences.

Choir: Grades 6-8, No audition for the beginner class
This yearlong course is geared toward performance and will emphasize music notation reading, sight-singing skills, and offer multiple opportunities to perform.

Intro Theatre MS: Grades 6-8, Auditions and interviews required
This course requires no prior experience in theatre and is designed to explore the nature of theatre as a performing art. This class will train the actor in the areas of speech, voice, movement, music, and dance. Students will study selected plays from the perspectives of actors and directors, and the strategies of playwrights to develop the ability to imagine the play in performance and to appreciate the range of theatre's possibilities. The acting curriculum features improvisation, storytelling, poetry, text analysis, contemporary and classical scene studies, neutral mask, character mask, clowning, commedia dell'arte, television and film technique, and audition preparation. This Theatre program will include spots for students who are interested in set, costume, lighting and sound design for the theatre. Course may involve costs of attending professional theatre productions.

Explorations in Science: Grades 6-8
This yearlong course is for students who wish to pursue independent projects to further their interest and understanding of science and/or engineering. Students will select one or more projects from various options including MESA, Science Bowl, and computer programming. MESA involves engineering competitions (egg drop, balsa wood glider, and bridge-building are some examples?) that start out at the regional level and all students are eligible to compete. Science Bowl is a quiz-based competition for all to try-out to make our school team. Our Science Bowl team has won the L.A Regional Competition the past two years, and members from those teams earned trips to Washington D.C. for the national competition. Students who choose the programming option will follow the curriculum on a coding website (code.org, and codeacademy are examples). In addition to working on the above, all students will participate in a science project with mentoring by UCLA undergraduate students. The UCLA students visit weekly, and this aspect of the course will culminate with a field trip to UCLA for a personalized tour and a science fair.
Exploratory Wheel – Folk Art, Capoeira (1 semester each): Grades 6-8
This is an introductory course designed to expose students to a wide variety of cultural and academic interests. Each segment is taught by a different teacher, and students rotate through each course within the school year. Options may change.

World Languages & Cultures Wheel: An Introduction to French, Japanese, Korean, and Spanish: Grades 6-8
This is an introductory course designed to expose students to the French, Japanese, and Korean, and Spanish languages and cultures. Each 10-week segment is taught by a different foreign language teacher, and students rotate through each language/culture within the school year.

Middle School Journalism: Grades 6-8
This yearlong course offers introductory training in writing news stories, feature articles, and editorials; in basic interview techniques; and in collecting, selecting, and organizing material from other sources. Students will learn to distinguish the major types of material in a newspaper, identify parts of the lead paragraph of a news story that tell who, what, when, where, and how, and recognize the elements of an event that make it newsworthy.

Intro to Computer (Robotics): Grades 6-8
This yearlong course will introduce students to basic through early advanced computer skills. Keyboarding, word processing, basic internet skills, and computer generated art will be covered. Students will also learn basic programming, build robotic models, and learn to design computer programs to enable their robots to move.

Beginning Foods: Grades 6-8
This year long course emphasizes skills necessary to the selection and preparation of nutritious foods. Topics will include consumer decision-making, basic concepts of nutrition; and the planning, preparing and serving of nutritious meals. There will be hands-on opportunities to prepare foods during this class.

Advanced Art: Grades 7-8; Prerequisite: Art Production
This yearlong course is designed for experienced art students. It follows the California State Framework for Visual Arts and Common Core Standards. We will focus on art elements and principles as they relate to four components of art education; artistic perception, creative expression, historical and cultural context, and aesthetic valuation. Creative thinking, problem solving, and skill acquisition are stressed in all assignments. Projects will be in a variety of media, and will be both two and three-dimensional. Student success will depend on full participation in class activities, adherence to project requirements, and quality of execution.

Middle School Speech and Debate (Speech MS): Grades 6-8
Students will learn about and practice structured extemporaneous speeches with emphasis on verbal and nonverbal delivery skills (organization, projection, inflection, eye-contact, hand gestures, and more). Students will then build a foundation for effective argumentation and advocacy (claim/warrant/evidence) by participating in debates and presenting research-based persuasive speeches on various topics. Special emphasis will be placed on critical thinking and listening skills as well as argument resolution.

Geography Middle School: Grades 6-8
Designed to introduce students to the study of geography, this course helps students master important concepts in human geography. Comprehensive and organized by region, this two semester middle school course helps students understand the Earth's physical and human diversity. Students analyze population and settlement patterns and evaluate the ways that human activities modify the physical environment. While studying humans around the world, students will compare development, population, migration, folk and popular culture, language, religion, standards of living, systems of government, and economic factors across the globe. In addition, students gain a rich understanding of global cultures and the historical factors that have shaped the world around them.

Creative Writing: Grades 6-8
Creative Writing is a year-long course that explores different genres of writing through both reading and writing, as well as the other necessary elements needed to improve writing and composition skills. This course is designed with the goal of inspiring students to develop original pieces and ideas. Studying the writing process in this course will help students in other courses as well, especially English. Writing genres covered include autobiographies, short narratives, poetry, short stories, plays and journals. The work of students is included in a personal and comprehensive portfolio of writing samples representing the full range of genres studies throughout the course.

Spanish 1, French 1, Japanese 1, Korean 1: Priorities given for 7th grade students with satisfactory completion of World Languages and Cultures with a grade of B or better and 8th grade students who will be in Honors 8th grade English.
These are first year high school courses taught at the high school level. These high school courses are open to middle school students to motivate them. Students will be able to continue with their foreign language study in 9th grade and beyond, satisfying the UC/Cal State requirement for a minimum study of two years of the same foreign language.