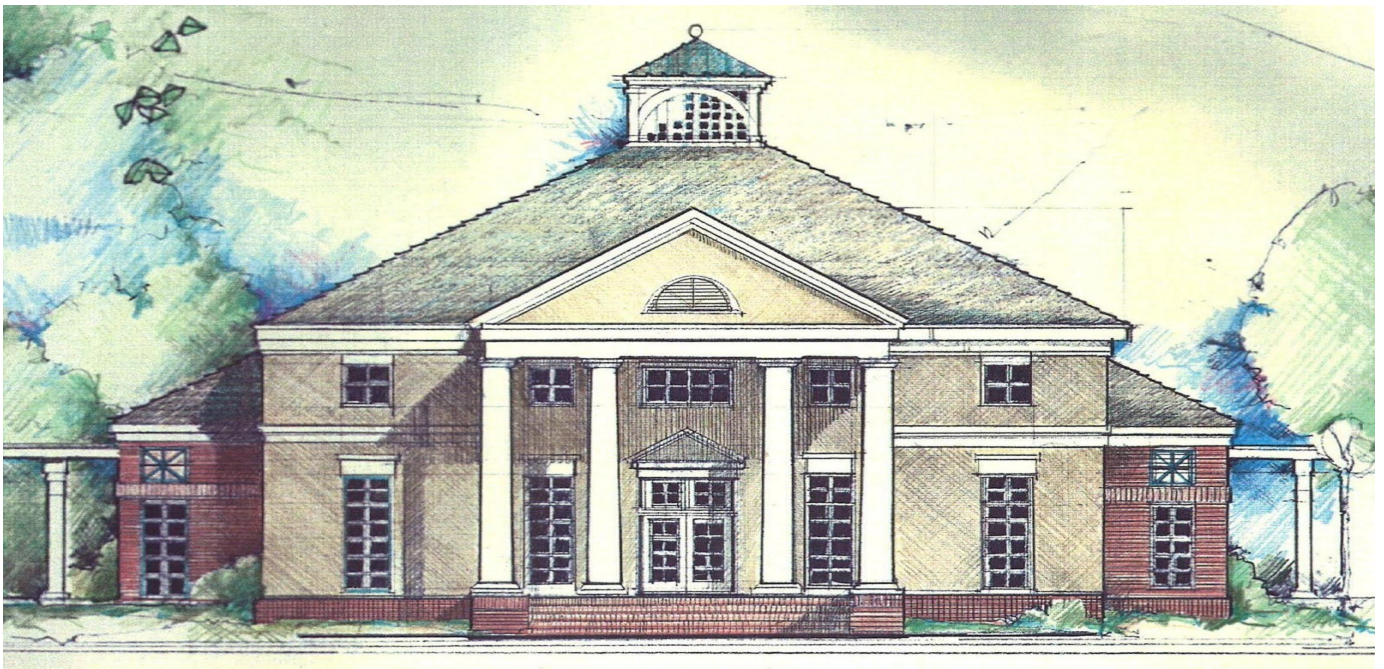


Saint James School

Middle School Course of Study 2020 -2021



Courtesy of Barganier Davis Sims Architects Associated

Saint James is an independent, nonsectarian, and college preparatory school, with a student body broadly representative of college-bound students. We are committed to challenging and assisting students in realizing their individual potential and preparing them for lives of responsibility, service, and achievement.

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Forward

The middle school program for sixth through eighth grades serves as a transition between elementary school and high school in both environment and course material. Students are introduced to advisory groups, exploratory courses, and electives. The middle school provides the structure that supports these changes.

We recognize the individuality of students and appreciate their talents, interests, and needs. Students learn in an environment where mutual respect, shared responsibility, and the value of each individual are emphasized. All students are held to high expectations and the process of learning as a lifelong experience is encouraged. Academic programs are geared toward providing a challenging college preparatory curriculum while recognizing that middle school students also need structure, support, consistency, and encouragement as they mature through these vital years.

Each middle school student is issued an iPad each year, which has become an invaluable learning tool in our curriculum. This 1:1 program allows the students to always have access to the tools and resources of the 21st Century classroom. Our finding is that students learn best and are more engaged when they are able to access, analyze, and synthesize information using digital tools. The 1:1 iPad program helps our students to achieve and be successful in a fully digital learning environment.

Although emphasis is given to the core academic instruction, an integrated curriculum is the focus for middle school instruction. The middle school program is designed to promote the intellectual, social, emotional, physical, and cultural well being of each of our students. We strive to develop maturity, self-confidence, skills and knowledge.

Through advisory periods, exploratory courses, electives, and core academic courses, students strengthen their abilities and explore and develop individual talents. We strive to create classroom environments that are inviting and conducive to learning, taking into account the varied learning styles of our students.

Middle School Students are nurtured in an environment created especially for the needs of their age group in which they are encouraged to develop a sense of self-confidence, self-respect, and self-reliance.

COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

SIXTH GRADE ACADEMIC COURSES

English 6

Students focus on grammar, reading, and composition with emphasis on effective communication for academic success. Grammar instruction centers around mastering parts of speech, usage, mechanics, and sentence structures. Students read informational text, as well as long and short forms of fiction from a variety of genres. Composition instruction focuses on the writing process, correct and varied sentences, and production of essays, short stories, and poems. Students are introduced to writing in MLA format.

Math 6

Students build on their knowledge of adding, subtracting, multiplying, and dividing with whole numbers, decimals, fractions, and integers. Order of operations, exponents, and variables continue to be used. Pre-Algebra concepts are introduced as students study properties, solve one and two-step equations and inequalities, and learn about functions. Percent, ratio, and proportion are studied, as well as statistics, data analysis with graphs, and probability.

Geometry is also a part of this course with students finding perimeter, area, and circumference, classifying angles and polygons, and graphing ordered pairs on a coordinate plane. Both the metric and customary units of measure are used in Math 6. An emphasis is placed on math vocabulary and problem solving.

(Students who complete Math 6 with a grade of 90 or higher for both semesters will be recommended for Advanced Pre-Algebra.)

Earth and Space Science

Earth and Space Science integrates the disciplines of astronomy, meteorology, geology, chemistry, and environmental science. Students develop scientific thinking and process skills through hands-on experiences such as research, lab experiences, writing, and other small group activities. Students will also apply the scientific method in order to state a hypothesis, follow a procedure, identify independent and dependent variables, make observations, collect data, and draw conclusions. This course will provide students with a sound understanding of Earth and Space Science as well as how to work properly in the lab with others, and apply the knowledge learned to other situations. (Refer to page 23 for more information about middle school and high school science course sequencing)

Social Studies 6

World Cultures is the focus of the sixth grade social studies class. The students study ancient river valley civilizations such as Egypt and the Huang civilization in China, military empires such as the Assyrians and Persians, the Greek and Roman empires, European Medieval times, and the European Renaissance.

Skills such as map usage, research, reading comprehension, and note-taking are emphasized. Art is incorporated as an element students use to explore these areas of civilization. The students develop an understanding of how classical civilizations contributed to modern society.

Vocabulary 6

The vocabulary course expands a student's knowledge of words with a study of definitions, parts of speech, synonyms, antonyms, and spelling. Proper usage of the words and application in sentences is emphasized as well. Students also increase their vocabulary by reading a teacher-approved book each quarter. Students will have this class with their Advisor.

SIXTH GRADE EXPLORATORY COURSES

Each exploratory class meets five days per week for a period of 9 weeks. All sixth graders rotate through each of these classes. The topics of the exploratory classes are subject to change.

Technology Tools I

This is an introductory class in which students will utilize digital tools to gather, evaluate, and use information. Students will produce creative word documents and multimedia projects.

Students are introduced to various web browsers as they begin exploring use of the Internet as a research tool. In an interdisciplinary unit, students learn to create a basic slide presentation. Competent use of MacBooks, iPads and other appropriate digital devices will be a focus of the course.

Explore Art

Sixth Grade Art Exploratory is designed to broaden student's knowledge of time periods in art, selected artists, and the works of those artists. Students will be introduced to historical content about the time periods and artists as well as select works. Students will use similar techniques to create individual visual interpretations of the time period and the artist studied. Students will maintain an art portfolio of drawings, watercolors, sketches, and projects.

Explore Math I

Explore Math is designed to enhance a student's knowledge of math in a fun way and make connections to art and other disciplines. The class may include projects with tessellations, tangrams, patterns, geometric shapes, logic puzzles, and pentominoes. Probability is explained as we play math games. With tessellations and patterns, we will integrate a study of M.C. Escher's art, stained glass art, and quilt patterns. Students will also develop and apply beginning and intermediate coding skills through visual programming lessons, experiences, and projects.

Explore Language I

This course is an overview of the basics of the Spanish language. Students will study vocabulary such as greetings, expressions of courtesy, the Spanish alphabet days of the week, months of the year, numbers, colors, etc. Students will also learn grammatical concepts such as verb conjugation, subject pronouns, definite and indefinite articles, and adjective agreement. They will also explore the customs and traditions that are practiced in Spanish-speaking societies around the world. In addition to learning Spanish, students will also be studying how certain languages changed through history and spread throughout the world.

SIXTH GRADE ELECTIVE COURSES

Sixth grade students must choose an elective(s) from those listed below.

1st Semester Art 6*

The sixth grade course will involve a review and build upon the elements and principles of design that were introduced at the elementary level. It will encompass an in depth study of drawing techniques as well as an introduction to acrylic and watercolor painting. The art history component will consist of a comprehensive study of Egyptian, Italian Renaissance, and West African art. Students will be introduced to various aesthetic viewpoints as well as standards of art criticism.

***An art fee is required.**

2nd Semester Art 6*

The sixth grade course will involve a review and build upon the elements and principles of design that were introduced at the elementary level. It will encompass an in depth study of drawing techniques as well as an introduction to three dimensional art. The art history component will consist of 19th century European art including Impressionism, Post-Impressionism, and Fauvism. Aesthetic viewpoints and standards of art criticism will be reviewed.

***An art fee is required.**

Beginning Band

The Beginning Band is the introductory instrumental ensemble at Saint James. It functions as a performing group of beginning musicians with no previous experience. The class meets the entire year and students learn aspects of instrumental music performance that include position, flexibility, style, blend, theory, dynamics, articulation, tone, listening, teamwork, breath control, rhythm, and intonation. The Beginning Band requires a commitment to pursue excellence in all aspects of the instrumental music program. Beginning Band members perform in the winter/holiday concert and the spring concert.

Our band director spends a good deal of time helping our 6th graders choose the best instrument for the individual student. **Parents will be responsible for purchasing or renting an instrument and respective method book. Please keep in mind that the cost of renting an instrument will vary depending on the instrument and vendor. Other supplies may also be required.**

6th Grade Choir

The 6th Grade Choir is a performance based music class. The students, using technology and their iPads, will learn a variety of music, singing alone and with others; reading and notating music; listening to, analyzing, and describing music; and evaluating and listening to music performances. Technology and iPads will be further used to explore music theory and music composition throughout the year. Throughout the year, the students have the opportunity to perform in various settings such as the Saint James Holiday Convocation, the Holiday Concert, District and State Festival, the Spring Concert, the Annual Choral Music Department Cabaret Fundraiser, and other community events. Individuals can develop their talents further through extra-curricular activities such as Alabama Vocal Association All State Choir and American Choral Directors Association Young Voices Festival. Emphasis in class is placed on teamwork and vocal development through practice. Parents are required to purchase a performance uniform: a tuxedo for the guys, and a choral dress for the ladies.

Read, Write, Create (Semester Course)

This course blends Reading Workshop and Writing Workshop with student-directed research projects. Students read and respond to a wide variety of literature. Through writing activities, students become more skillful and confident authors. Peer editing and self-reflection are important features of this course. Students share their work using a Google Drive site.

Robotics 6 (Semester Course)

Students take on the roles of mechanical engineers, computer scientists and electrical engineers. Students assemble and program robots using robotic kits. All areas of the scientific method are reinforced such as formulating a question, writing a hypothesis, collecting and analyzing data, and writing a conclusion. Teamwork is emphasized through the construction of a basic robot.

Beginning Vocal/Instrumental Dual Studies*

This class is designed for students who wish to study music on both a musical instrument as well as with the voice. **Students will alternate class attendance between Beginning Band and Chorus each day. If the rotation schedule should alter, the teachers will have the responsibility of communicating this change to the students in advance.** Students will be held responsible for maintaining all information given out in class as well as keeping the required level of proficiency with vocal and instrumental performance. Grades assigned for the course will be a numerical average of the grade assigned to students based on their performance in Beginning Band and the grade assigned for 6th grade Chorus. Students registering for this class may do so only with the permission of the band and choral teacher.

These teachers' approval will be based on teacher recommendation and may require a parent/teacher conference. It is also suggested that students who enroll in this class study with a private teacher on their instrument and voice. **Parents will be responsible for purchasing a uniform: a tux for the guys and a choral dress for the ladies and purchasing or renting a band instrument and required music.**

*Requires teacher recommendation and parent/teacher conference for approval.

***For middle school students, registration payment, current account status, and grade point average (GPA) will be among the criteria used for course placement (Saint James School Student/Parent Handbook 2019 - 2020, pg. 9).**

SEVENTH GRADE ACADEMIC COURSES

English 7

English 7 focuses on literature, writing, and grammar. Students broaden their understanding of grammar with a study of the parts of speech, parts of a sentence, usage, and mechanics. Their knowledge of grammar is put into practice when they compose personal writing and literary responses through expository, descriptive, narrative, or persuasive paragraphs. Students also learn to publish in MLA format, cite sources, and create a works cited page. As they read and discuss short stories, poems, and the classic novel *Where the Red Fern Grows*, students identify literary techniques, analyze plot and characterization, and explore theme, point of view, and setting. The goal of the English 7 class is to further refine grammar skills, study literary works, write effective personal selections, and compose thoughtful responses to literature.

Geography 7

Seventh grade World Geography is a study of the earth, emphasizing both human geography and physical geography. Studies include world cultures, economic development, world trade, and world resources. Special emphasis is placed on map identification as each of the earth's regions are explored.

Life Science 7

The seventh grade course, Life Science, is an introduction to biology. The students learn about living organisms from one-celled organisms to the complex human body. The five kingdoms are studied with an emphasis on the processes that maintain life. The novel, *The Call of the Wild*, will also be incorporated into the science program. The human body is investigated through a systems approach. Rodin's *The Thinker* is used to study the human muscular system. (Refer to page 23 for more information about middle school and high school science course sequencing)

Pre-Algebra

Pre-Algebra is a study of basic algebraic concepts beginning with operations with integers. This study is then extended to include rational numbers, applying the rules for order of operations with positive and negative numbers, solving equations, inequalities, and proportions, finding slopes of lines, and graphing linear equations and inequalities. Another important aspect of Pre-Algebra is solving word problems using algebraic concepts. Basic geometric principles and solving of simultaneous systems are also introduced. introduced in this course. At this level, calculator use is limited, allowing students to continue to improve basic skills.

Students who have at least an 82 average for both semesters in Pre-Algebra during the 7th grade year will take Algebra I in the 8th grade. This will allow them to take Geometry in the 9th grade. Students that have below an 82 in 7th grade Pre-Algebra will take Transitional Algebra in the 8th grade. This will enable them to take Algebra I in the 9th grade. In order to be able to progress to Advanced Algebra I, students

must maintain an average of at least 97 for both semesters in Pre-Algebra **and** have a teacher recommendation.

Advanced Pre-Algebra

Prerequisite for Advanced Pre-Algebra: All students that earned a grade of 90 or above for both semesters in 6th grade Math will be placed in this course. In the event that the number of requests of qualified students exceeds space available, placement may be based on a combination of recommendation and the highest numerical averages.

Advanced Pre-Algebra is a study of basic algebraic concepts beginning with operations with integers, then is extended to include rational numbers. Applying the rules for order of operations with positive and negative numbers, solving equations, inequalities, and proportions, finding slopes of lines, graphing linear equations and inequalities, and solving word problems using algebraic concepts are also significant components of this course. Basic geometric principles, applications to reflections and translations of figures on a coordinate plane are made, and solving of simultaneous systems are also introduced in this course. At this level, calculator use is limited, allowing students to continue to improve basic skills.

In order to progress to Advanced Algebra I in eighth grade, students must maintain a grade of 92 or above for both semesters in Advanced Pre-Algebra. Students who have at least a 82 average for both semesters in Advanced Pre-Algebra during the 7th grade year will take Algebra I in the 8th grade. This will allow them to take Geometry in the 9th grade. Students that have below an 82 in 7th grade Advanced Pre-Algebra will take Transitional Algebra in the 8th grade. This will enable them to take Algebra I in the 9th grade.

Vocabulary 7

The Vocabulary 7 study is designed to guide and stimulate systematic vocabulary growth. The study includes word meanings, pronunciation, spelling, parts of speech, synonyms, antonyms, analogies, usage and critical thinking exercises. Reinforcement of and exposure to vocabulary is reiterated as students read assigned novels and complete various writing activities.

SEVENTH GRADE EXPLORATORY COURSES

Each exploratory class meets five days per week for a period of 9 weeks. All seventh graders rotate through each of these classes. The topics of the exploratory classes are subject to change.

Technology Tools II

This is an intermediate technology class designed to further the understanding of the programs that were introduced in the 6th Grade Exploratory. Students will continue improving keyboarding proficiency and will complete a project using the AVL and other online databases to research biographical information. They will also complete an assignment using a variety of technologies to compare and contrast works of artists or composers. In an interdisciplinary unit, students will do research using online databases and develop a multimedia presentation. Competent use of MacBooks, iPads and other appropriate digital devices will be a focus of the course.

Explore Math II

This exploratory is designed to strengthen the understanding of probability and odds in a fun and engaging manner. These concepts will be explored mathematically and experimentally. This course also emphasizes the difference between dependent and independent events in probability. Combinations and permutations will be introduced and evaluated. In addition, students will develop and apply beginning and intermediate coding skills through visual programming lessons, experiences, and projects.

World Current Events

World Current Events will give students the opportunity to become informed citizens and develop an appreciation for world events as they occur. Areas of study will include local, state, national, and international news. *Junior Scholastic* will be a primary source of information along with other reputable print and broadcast journalism services.

Explore Language II

In this course, students will study Spanish while discussing a variety of topics dealing with everyday life and their surroundings. Students will continue to study grammatical concepts, such as the conjugation of regular and irregular verbs. In addition to learning Spanish, they will also be studying how languages have spread throughout the world in the modern era. They will be learning about the languages represented today in certain regions and countries, including the United States.

*Students who take Spanish 1A as an elective course will still be required to take Explore Language II

SEVENTH GRADE ELECTIVES COURSES

Seventh grade students must choose an elective(s) from those listed below.

Art 7*

This year-long course will review and build upon the elements and principles of design as well as aspects of aesthetics and criticism. It will encompass an in-depth study of drawing techniques as well as a study of various styles of Art. Acrylic and watercolor techniques will be reviewed. Students will study glass as an art form and will learn the basic techniques of glass fusing. Students will study clay pottery as an art form and will learn the basic techniques of extruding pottery and firing pottery. Aesthetic viewpoints and standards of art criticism will be reviewed.

***Payment of an art fee is required.**

7th Grade Choir

The 7th Grade Choir is a performance based music class. The students, using technology and their iPads, will learn a variety of music, singing alone and with others; reading and notating music; listening to, analyzing, and describing music; and evaluating and listening to music performances. Technology and iPads will be further used to explore music theory and music composition throughout the year. The students will have the opportunity to perform in various settings such as the Saint James Holiday Convocation, the Holiday Concert, District and State Festival, the Spring Concert, the Annual Choral Music Department Cabaret Fundraiser, and other community events. Individuals can develop their talents further through extra-curricular activities such as Alabama Vocal Association All State Choir and American Choral Directors Association Young Voices Festival. Emphasis in class is placed on teamwork and vocal development through practice. **Parents are required to purchase a performance uniform: a tuxedo for the guys, and a choral dress for the ladies.**

Intermediate Band

Prerequisite for Intermediate Band is membership in the Saint James Beginning Band or one year of previous band membership at another school. Students wishing to become a member of the Intermediate band who were not a part of Beginning Band should arrange for private lessons and contact the band director for approval.

The Intermediate Band meets during the second year of instrumental music. The class meets the entire year and its members are drawn primarily from Beginning Band. Students will continue to learn aspects of instrumental music performance that include position, flexibility, style, blend, embouchure, coordination, theory, dynamics, articulation, composing, technique, teamwork, rhythm, history, and balance. Intermediate Band students perform at the winter/holiday and spring concerts and will travel to one music festival each year. Intermediate Band members have the option to audition to become a member of the

Trojan Marching Band in addition to their regular class. The Saint James Intermediate Band requires a commitment to pursue excellence in all aspects of the instrumental music program. **Parents will be responsible for renting or purchasing an instrument and respective method book. Other supplies may be required.**

Spanish 1A

Prerequisite: In order to enroll in Spanish 1A, students must have a numerical average of 85 or above for each semester in each of the following sixth grade courses: English, Math, Science and History. Students must also be approved by the Middle School counselor following a conversation with the student and his or her parent(s) that reflects their understanding that this is an academic elective that will include homework, quizzes, tests and exams, plus the necessity of following this up with Spanish 1B in 8th grade.

Spanish 1A students participate in an introductory course in speaking, reading, writing and listening comprehension. Culture, geography, and history are explored in the Spanish speaking world.

Students who complete Spanish 1A and 1B successfully will be allowed to enroll in Spanish 2 in ninth grade if they meet the prerequisite of scoring 70% or higher in Spanish 1B. High school credit will not awarded for classes taken in middle school. This class will allow students to accelerate their study of Spanish. The high school world language requirement is “two consecutive levels of the same world language.” The honors diploma requirement is, “The student must receive high school credit for three different levels of the same world language.” Therefore, students who complete Spanish 1B in 8th grade and move to Spanish 2 in 9th grade will also be required to pass Spanish 3 in order to meet graduation requirements and Spanish 4 in order to be eligible for an Honors diploma.

Speech and Drama (Semester Course)

The elective Speech and Drama class will offer many creative opportunities for seventh graders. The goal of the speech portion of this elective is to introduce students to skills that promote effective communication. In the drama portion, students participate actively as they perform short plays and pantomimes and take part in improvisational theater games. Students will work together to produce a short play to be performed for an audience at the end of each semester.

Healthy Living (Semester Course)

This course consists of hands-on activities designed to teach students how to live a healthy life. We will spend time studying each body system, learning what we can do to keep that system healthy, and dissecting an organ from some of the systems we study. Students will have the opportunity to dissect a heart, brain, kidney and eyeball. We will also discuss nutrition and exercise as part of a healthy life. Students will learn

to choose healthier snacks and explore different types of exercise. This course will be a fun and exciting way to become a healthier individual.

Robotics 7 (Semester Course)

In this one semester course, students will take on the roles of mechanical engineers, computer scientists, and electrical engineers as they assemble and program robots using robotic kits. All areas of the scientific method are reinforced, such as formulating a question, writing a hypothesis, collecting and analyzing data, and writing a conclusion. Teamwork is emphasized throughout this process.

**A student does NOT have to have taken Robotics 6 to enroll in Robotics 7.*

Intermediate Vocal/Instrumental Dual Studies

This class is designed for students who wish to study music on both a musical instrument as well as with the voice. **Students will alternate class attendance between Intermediate Band and Chorus each day. If the rotation schedule should alter, the teachers will have the responsibility of communicating this change to the students in advance.** Students will be held responsible for maintaining all information given out in class as well as keeping the required level of proficiency with vocal and instrumental performance. Grades assigned for the course will be a numerical average of the grade assigned to students based on their performance in Intermediate Band and the grade assigned for 7th grade Chorus. Students registering for this class may do so only with the permission of the band and choral teacher, which will be based on teacher recommendation and may require a parent/teacher conference. It is also suggested that students who enroll in this class study with a private teacher on their instrument and voice. **Parents will be responsible for purchasing a uniform: a tux for the guys and a choral dress for the ladies plus the purchase or rental of a band instrument and required literature.**

***For middle school students, registration payment, current account status, and grade point average (GPA) will be among the criteria used for course placement (Saint James School Student/Parent Handbook 2019-2020 pg. 9).**

EIGHTH GRADE ACADEMIC COURSES

English 8

Eighth grade English encompasses literature, grammar, and writing. Students continue to identify, to interpret, and to analyze literary elements and techniques as they read and study selected short stories, non-fiction, dramatic pieces, and novels. There continues to be concentration of studying grammar, mechanics, and usage. Emphasis is placed on proficiency and creativity in student writing as well as the further development of writing skills using MLA format.

Advanced English 8

Prerequisite: Students must maintain a grade of 92 for both semesters in 7th grade English and receive a teacher recommendation. In the event that the number of requests of qualified students exceeds space available, placement may be based on a combination of recommendation and the highest numerical averages.

Eighth grade Advanced English encompasses literature, grammar, and writing. Students continue to identify, to interpret, and to analyze literary elements and techniques as they read and study selected short stories, non-fiction, dramatic pieces, and novels. There continues to be concentration of studying grammar, mechanics, and usage. Emphasis is placed on proficiency in student writing as well as the further development of writing and research skills using MLA format. Further emphasis will be placed on critical thinking and higher level discussion skills. Students in advanced English explore modern classic literature and write papers every quarter.

Transitional Algebra

Transitional Algebra is offered to students who desire to gain a deeper understanding of the basic algebraic concepts before moving on to Algebra I. These concepts include operations with rational numbers; solving equations, inequalities, and proportions; the basics of geometry, finding slope and rate of change, and graphing linear equations and inequalities. Students will also make real-life applications with these concepts through a variety of word-problems. At this level, calculator use is limited allowing students to continue to improve basic skills. Successful completion of this course will allow the students to take Algebra I in the 9th grade.

Algebra I

Prerequisite: Students must maintain a grade of 82 for both semesters in Pre-Algebra and receive a teacher recommendation.

Algebra I extends the study of algebraic expressions and the graphing of linear and nonlinear equations and inequalities. Students will solve algebraically and graphically both with and without the graphing calculator. Emphasis will also be placed on factoring polynomials and simplifying terms and integral exponents. Real life applications will include use of technology in predicting outcomes of a variety of

situations. Successful completion of this course will allow students to take Geometry in the 9th grade.

Advanced Algebra I

Prerequisite: Students must maintain a grade of 92 for both semesters in Advanced Pre-Algebra or a 97 for both semesters in Pre Algebra and receive a teacher recommendation. In the event that the number of requests of qualified students exceeds space available, placement may be based on a combination of recommendation and the highest numerical averages.

Advanced Algebra I provides an opportunity for students to advance their understanding of the concepts from Algebra I by exploring additional concepts that will broaden their math foundation for Geometry, Algebra II, and Trigonometry. Several more types of functions, their inverses and asymptotes, and rational exponents will be covered in addition to the concepts covered in Algebra I. The use of technology is more heavily emphasized in areas of graphing, statistics, and probability. Successful completion of this course will allow students to take Advanced Geometry in the 9th grade.

U. S. History 8

Eighth Grade United States History takes the students on a journey from the discovery of America to modern day history. Along this journey, students will encounter and discuss issues, controversies, and decisions that have impacted our country. Students will also take in-depth looks at crucial turning points in our history through hands-on projects, self-studies, lectures, and group discussions. The skill of taking notes from outlines and lectures will be stressed and students will utilize many primary source documents in their studies. Historical novels will be used to complement the study of particular periods. With our emerging use of technology, online activities that are historically-based will be utilized and primary sources, paintings, documents, etc., will be readily available for the students to see history come alive.

Advanced U.S. History 8

Prerequisite: Students must maintain a grade of 92 for both semesters in 7th grade Geography and receive a teacher recommendation. In the event that the number of requests of qualified students exceeds space available, placement may be based on a combination of recommendation and the highest numerical averages.

Students in this class will study American History from discovery through the modern era. Advanced students will study and discuss issues, controversies, and decisions that have impacted our country through in-depth discussion and document based questions which utilize primary sources. Along with hands-on projects, self-studies, lectures, and a mock trial, advanced students will have the opportunity to delve deeper into the study of American History through supplemental readings and responsive essays. Advanced students will be participating in an historical mock trial that will coincide with our unit of study. With our emerging use of technology, online activities that are historically-based will be utilized and primary sources, paintings, documents, etc. will be readily available for the students to see history come alive.

Physical Science

The Physical Science curriculum in 8th grade introduces students to various aspects of the physical world, focusing first on chemistry and then on physics with a limited focus on earth and space science. This is a practical science course designed for students who desire an understanding of chemical and physical concepts and applications. The course provides an overview of the physical world and gives students tools and concepts to think clearly about properties of matter, states of matter, atomic structure, the periodic table, chemical bonds, chemical reactions, solutions acids and bases, carbon chemistry, motion and forces, work, power and machines energy, mechanical waves and sound, and electricity and magnetism. Fundamental concepts of chemistry and physics with an application to everyday experiences are covered. This course is designed to give the student a working knowledge of the physical factors in our environment. (Refer to page 23 for more information about the new middle school and high school science course sequencing)

Advanced Physical Science**

***In order to be eligible to take Advanced Physical Science in 8th grade, students must have a 92 or above average for each semester in both Life Science and Pre-Algebra. Final eligibility will be reviewed again at the end of the year and students who need to make a schedule change at that time will be notified. In the event that the number of requests of qualified students exceeds space available, placement may be based on a combination of recommendation and the highest numerical averages.*

Students who are eligible and opt to take Advanced Physical Science in 8th grade will be REQUIRED to take Honors Biology in 9th grade and Chemistry or Honors Chemistry in 10th grade.

Advanced Physical Science is an introductory course that covers extensive topics in chemistry and physics and limited topics in earth and space science. Chemistry topics include: properties of matter, states of matter, atomic structure, the periodic table, chemical bonds, chemical reactions, solutions, acids and bases, and carbon chemistry. Physics includes a study of motion and forces, work, power and machines, energy, mechanical waves and sound, and electricity and magnetism. Many of the fundamental principles that are studied require mathematical calculations. (Refer to page 23 for more information about middle school and high school science course sequencing)

Vocabulary 8

The Vocabulary 8 study is designed to guide and stimulate systematic vocabulary growth in students. The study includes word meanings, pronunciation, parts of speech, synonyms, antonyms, analogies, usage and critical thinking exercises. Each quarter, students read one accelerated reader book at the appropriate reading level for a test grade.

EIGHTH GRADE EXPLORATORY COURSES

Each exploratory class meets five days per week for a period of 9 weeks. All eighth graders rotate through each of these classes. The topics of the exploratory classes are subject to change.

Technology Tools III

Students build on skills and knowledge from the previous computer exploratory courses to begin studying additional components of Keynote, and iMovie. Throughout the course, general keyboarding skills are emphasized. The students will take pictures and create innovative projects. Students are reminded of the Alabama Virtual Library and school purchased databases available to them and will use these databases in research projects. The students will collaborate with their classmates to create a video presentation using various digital devices.

Explore Speech

The goal of this course is to introduce students to formal public speaking and debate. Students will begin with learning about writing an argument, organizing a logically flowing case, and practicing basic presentation skills. They will then advance to preparing a researched debate case, persuasive appeals, and advanced delivery.

Explore Language III

In this course, students will continue exploring the languages and cultures of the Spanish-speaking world. Students will research famous Hispanic figures. They will also continue studying basic Spanish grammar and learning vocabulary dealing with everyday life. In addition to learning Spanish, they will also be exploring the benefits that knowing a second language can add to different careers.

Students taking Spanish 1B are still required to take Explore Language III.

Explore Math III

In this course, students will be introduced to a variety of topics not covered in a basic classroom. Students are taught how to budget, apply for a loan, and calculate taxes among other real-world math experiences. They explore the process of purchasing a home and vehicle. This course offers students an introduction and insight to the many math skills they will need to become successful adults. In addition, students will develop and apply beginning and intermediate coding skills through visual programming lessons, experiences, and projects.

EIGHTH GRADE ELECTIVE COURSES

Eighth grade students must choose an elective(s) from those listed below.

Art and Photography*

The eighth grade art program will continue to build upon the elements and principles of design. The program will include a study of various styles of art, focusing on building drawing skills as well as using an iPad sketchbook for drawing and notes (Paper 53). The photography component will include the history of photography as well as an investigation of important photographers. Students will explore black and white photography using a Holga pinhole camera while creating a variety of techniques in the darkroom. Due to the photography component and the size of the darkroom, class size is limited to 15 students.

***Payment of an art fee is required.**

Advanced Band

Prerequisite: Two years previous experience in the Saint James band program or two years experience in a band program at another school or meeting and audition with the band director.

The Advanced Band meets in conjunction with the High School Symphonic Band and Trojan Marching Band. Advanced Band is taught the last period of the day and will not be dismissed until 3:19 each day, which is the regular high school dismissal time. This class meets the entire year. The daily rehearsals of this group build upon fundamentals learned in Beginning and Intermediate Band. Students are required to attend band camp in the summer prior to the beginning of school and maintain an after school rehearsal schedule through October. Additional Visual Ensembles are part of this group that includes guard, twirlers, and dancers. The Symphonic Band performs at various concerts throughout the year and regularly attends district and state competitions. **Parents will be responsible for purchasing or renting instruments and other necessary supplies.**

Robotics 8

In this year-long course, Robotics 8 will be a transition from 6th and 7th grade robotics towards high school-level robotics. Use of LEGO EV3 robotics will be further explored, while BEST and VEX robotics will be introduced.

Invention Convention: Exploring Science (a one semester course paired with *Civics and Me*)

Students who elect to take this semester-long elective will have the opportunity to participate in challenging, interactive, and “hands-on” STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Mathematics) activities. Students get to investigate various inventions in history through research and writing, designing and building, and film critiquing. Various topics are explored and within each topic students research and write to gather information concerning the topic, design and build an apparatus to mimic the invention, and watch a video demonstrating the real-world connection of the invention. The activities will involve problem solving experiences related to all areas of science. Developing and utilizing critical thinking skills is also prioritized through the activities planned for this class. Activities emphasizing the integration of science, technology, engineering, art, and music are included. All students who are interested in pursuing scientific investigation and exploration are encouraged to consider this class.

Civics and Me (a one semester course paired with *Invention Convention: Exploring Science*)

This semester-long elective will explore the three branches of our American Government through hands-on activities, simulations, and working together. Have you ever wondered what it is like to be a Congressman/Congresswoman? Do you know what role the President of the United States plays in our government? Would you like to know the difference between criminal and civil law and follow a crime all the way from an arrest to the courtroom? This will be a fun, interactive class where we learn about our government and how to be informed citizens of good character.

***This class will have a fee attached for field trips and simulation activities.*

Spanish 1B

Spanish 1B students continue the introductory course in speaking, reading, writing, and listening comprehension. Culture, geography, and history are explored in the Spanish speaking world.

***Prerequisite:** In order to enroll in Spanish 1B, students must have completed Spanish 1A with a yearly average of 80 or higher. A student who is coming new to Saint James in 8th grade and has an extensive Spanish background may take a placement test to determine if he or she is prepared to enroll in Spanish 1B.*

Students who complete Spanish 1B successfully will be allowed to enroll in Spanish 2 in ninth grade if they meet the prerequisite of scoring 70% or higher in Spanish 1B. The middle school courses will not be awarded high school credit, but will allow students to accelerate their study of Spanish. The high school world language requirement is “two consecutive levels of the same world language.” The honors diploma requirement is, “The student must receive high school credit for three different levels of the same world language. Therefore, students who complete Spanish 1B in 8th grade and move to Spanish 2 in 9th grade will also be required to pass Spanish 3 in order to meet graduation requirements and Spanish 4 in order to be eligible for an Honors diploma.

Digital Journalism

Students will study the basics of journalism and put what they learn into practice as they use computers, a scanner, iPads, and other digital devices to create a digital newspaper for the Middle School four times each school year. They will study newspapers and the types of writing included in them. Students will participate

in activities that will improve their basic writing skills, build their vocabularies, and practice word processing. Students will organize still pictures and create a video of the 8th grader's trip to Washington D.C. Students will create a video to be shown at the end of the year for the 8th grade class which consists of pictures taken of the students during their middle school years at Saint James.

**Students interested in this elective will fill out an application to become part of the staff. Teachers and administrators will be consulted regarding each applicant's work ethic, conduct, compliance with the RUP, and ability to work well with others.*

Middle School Performance Fundamentals

Combining the fundamental studies of theater and the fundamentals of performing vocal music, this class allows students to explore and hone their talents in the realms of theater and choir. Students will explore creating theatrical performances through the use of voice, body, and imagination to create characters. Acting, techniques, and audition skills for drama and musicals will be covered. Students will participate as members of the Middle School Chorus. They will study music through preparation and performance of excellent repertoire from various cultures and styles. Students will be expected to audition for various festivals, including Youth Theater Festival and State Choral Performance Assessment.

Advanced Vocal/Instrumental Dual Studies*

*Requires teacher recommendation and parent/teacher conference.

This class is designed for students who wish to study music on both a musical instrument as well as with the voice. **Students will alternate class attendance between Advanced Band and Chorus each day. If the rotation schedule should alter, the teachers will have the responsibility of communicating this change to the students in advance.** Students will be held responsible for maintaining all information given out in class as well as keeping the required level of proficiency with vocal and instrumental performance. Grades assigned for the course will be a numerical average of the grade assigned to students based on their performance in Advanced Band and the grade assigned for 8th grade Chorus. Students registering for this class may do so only with the permission of the band and choral teacher, which will be based on teacher recommendation and may require a parent/teacher conference. It is also suggested that students who enroll in this class study with a private teacher on their instrument and voice. **Parents will be responsible for purchasing a uniform: a tux for the guys and a choral dress for the ladies as well as the purchase or rental of a band instrument and required literature.**

***For middle school students, registration payment, current account status, and grade point average (GPA) will be among the criteria used for course placement (Saint James School Student/Parent Handbook 2019-2020 pg. 9).**

GRADES 6, 7, AND 8

Advisory

Middle School students begin their day in an Advisory class where they learn practices to help them be a successful and organized student, have character-building lessons, and technology lessons related to real-time technology needs (updating iPads, installing needed classroom apps, etc.).

Exploratory and Elective Courses

New exploratory and elective courses may be developed to meet the changing needs of students.

Physical Education and Health

Each student must complete three years of physical education in Middle School. Students receive instruction in team sports, individual and dual sports, and fitness activities. Classes are designed to develop skills, knowledge, and interest through the enjoyment of physical activity by exposing students to a variety of activities, both in sports and fitness units. Development and display of sportsmanship is stressed.

Health education is integrated with the physical education program to develop successful health attitudes and practices. Areas of emphasis include: alcohol, tobacco, drugs, nutrition, first aid/CPR, personal health, human sexuality, and total wellness. Students learn that health is an ongoing process involving physical, mental, and social well being, and that desirable health practices are necessary for a wholesome life.

Library

Students learn the location of materials in the library and receive instruction in the use of various reference materials, online databases, the internet, and the online catalog. Research assistance is provided for whole classes, small groups, and individual students.

Guidance Services

The guidance services are an important aspect of the Saint James Middle School. These services include individual and group counseling, academic counseling, career guidance, national testing programs, individual student scheduling, incentive programs and much more. Students, parents, and teachers are encouraged to seek assistance from their counselor whenever they see the need.

Middle School and High School Math Course Sequencing

The chart below details the expected math track that students will follow in high school. Exceptions to these tracks must be approved by the Mathematics Department Head and the current math teacher.

Year 8th	9th	10th	11th	12th
Transitional Algebra →	Algebra 1 →	Geometry →	Algebra 2 →	Senior Algebra 3 & Trig.
Algebra 1* →	Geometry ***→	Algebra 2*** →	Algebra 3 & Trig. →	Pre-Calculus
Adv. Algebra 1* →	Honors Geometry →	Honor Alg. 2 w/ Trig. →	Honors Pre-Cal →	AP Calculus AB
Adv. Algebra 1** →	{Honors Geometry}	→ Honors Pre-Cal →	AP Calculus AB →	AP Calculus BC {& Honors Alg. 2 w/ Trig}

* Students with below a 75 average either semester of Algebra 1 in 8th grade will be required to follow the Transitional Algebra track, repeating Algebra 1 in the 9th grade. Completion of Algebra 1 in 8th grade with an average of 90 or above each semester, the student may be recommended to follow the Advanced Algebra 1 track beginning with Honors Geometry in 9th grade. Students who complete Advanced Algebra 1 with an 85 average each semester are required to continue on the honors sequence with Honors Geometry in the 9th grade.

** Students who complete Advanced Algebra 1 in 8th grade with distinction and upon teacher recommendation may apply to double in math as a 9th grader taking both Honors Geometry and Honors Algebra 2 w/ Trig. These students would progress to AP Calculus BC as a senior. Students must receive written approval from the teachers and the Math Department Head to double in math.

***Students who complete 9th grade Geometry and 8th grade Algebra 1 with distinction may be recommended to follow the honors sequence beginning with Honors Algebra 2 with Trig in the 10th grade.

NEW MIDDLE SCHOOL AND HIGH SCHOOL SCIENCE COURSE SEQUENCING STARTING 2019-2020

In keeping with the college preparatory mission of Saint James School, which includes our goal to ensure that students are prepared for the expectations of college in all core areas, we are up-dating the 6th through 12th grade science curriculum.

Beginning with the 2019-2020 school year, Saint James School will begin implementing changes to the science curriculum and graduation requirements which will take effect for the graduating class of 2024.

The following changes will be implemented in Middle School during the 2019-2020 school year:

- **6th Grade:** The science curriculum will focus on a year long study of *Earth and Space Science* appropriate for 6th grade learners.
- **7th Grade:** The science curriculum will continue to be a year long study of *Life Science*.
- **8th Grade:** All 8th grade students will take either *Physical Science* or *Advanced Physical Science*. Math and Science prerequisites will be used to determine placement.

Please note that:

- **9th Grade:** Students who completed *Earth Science* during the 2018-2019 school year will follow the current path and take *Physical Science* in 9th grade during the 2019-2020 school year. These students will take *Biology* or *Honors Biology* in 10th grade during the 2020-2021 school year. Prerequisites will be used to determine placement.

The following changes will be implemented in High School during the 2020-2021 school year effective for the graduating class of 2024:

- **9th Grade (Fall of 2020):** Students entering 9th grade will take either *Biology* or *Honors Biology*. Prerequisites will be used to determine placement. (*Chemistry* or *Honors Chemistry* will be a graduation requirement for this class.)
- **10th Grade (Fall of 2020)** Students who completed *Physical Science* in 9th grade during the 2019-2020 school year will take *Biology* or *Honors Biology* in 10th grade. Prerequisites will be used to determine placement. Students who completed *Biology* or *Advanced Biology* in 9th grade during the 2019-2020 school year will continue on the science track they began in 9th grade in order to meet graduation requirements and provide the best preparation for college. Prerequisites will be used to determine placement.
- **11th and 12th Grade (Fall of 2020)**-Students will continue on the science track they began in 9th grade in order to complete graduation requirements and provide the best preparation for college.*

*Please note that during the transition to the new requirements, some science courses may not be available. See additional information below.

Science Curriculum beginning with the 2021-2022 school year and moving forward:

- **9th Grade (Fall of 2021)**-Students entering 9th grade will take either *Biology* or *Honors Biology*. Prerequisites will be used to determine placement. (*Chemistry* or *Honors Chemistry* will be a graduation requirement for this class.)
- **10th (Fall of 2021)**-Students will be required to successfully complete *Chemistry* or *Honors Chemistry* prior to graduation. Students will continue on the science track they began in 9th grade in order to complete graduation requirements and provide the best preparation for college. Students are advised to work with their counselor on course selection.

*Please note that during the transition to the new requirements, some science courses may not be available. See additional information below.

Please note that during this transition, particularly during the 2020-2021 school year when the majority of 9th and 10th grade students will be taking *Biology* or *Honors Biology*, there may be some science electives which are not offered every year or have limited enrollment due to the number of sections available. **Students are advised to work closely with their counselor with course selection beginning with the 2019-2020 school year if there are specific science electives which they have prioritized.**

