



## High Desert School - Course Descriptions

### Core Content Areas

**English 7** – This course begins an in-depth, curriculum in grammar systematically taught to enhance students' ability to speak and write using English conventions. In reading, fluency and stamina are emphasized by setting individual reading goals for students to complete independently. Using an online program, growth in reading levels is evaluated monthly, and progress toward Quarterly reading goals is monitored. In-class reading and writing instruction focuses on understanding and responding to non-fiction and fiction reading selections. In accordance with Common Core goals and standards, students receive instruction in how to seek increasingly deep understanding of what they read and improve clarity and completeness in how they respond in writing. Students are expected to apply the grammar concepts being taught as they learn to produce progressively more sophisticated paragraph responses.

**English 7 Enriched** – This course begins an in-depth, curriculum in grammar systematically taught to enhance students' ability to speak and write using English conventions with negligible errors. In reading, ever-increasing fluency and stamina are emphasized by setting individual reading goals for students to complete independently. Enriched students are required to spend significantly more time reading and examine literature more in depth than students in English 7. As a result, Enriched students must read at or above grade level to qualify for admission to the class. Using an online program, growth in reading levels is evaluated monthly, and progress toward Quarterly reading goals is monitored. In-class reading and writing instruction focuses on understanding and responding to non-fiction and fiction reading selections. In accordance with Common Core goals and standards, students receive instruction in how to seek increasingly deeper understanding of what they read and improve the clarity and completeness with which they respond in writing. Enriched students are stretched to respond to some higher level questions that require greater depth of thought than those in English 7. Students are expected to apply the grammar concepts being taught as they learn to produce progressively more sophisticated paragraph responses.

**English 8** – This course continues with the in-depth curriculum in grammar systematically taught to enhance students' ability to speak and write using English conventions. In reading, fluency and stamina are emphasized by setting individual reading goals for students to complete independently. Using an online program, growth in reading levels is evaluated monthly, and progress toward Quarterly reading goals is monitored. In-class reading and writing instruction focuses on understanding and responding to non-fiction and fiction reading selections. In accordance with Common Core goals and standards, students receive instruction in how to seek increasingly deep understanding of what they read and improve clarity and

completeness in how they respond in writing. Students are expected to apply the grammar concepts being taught as they learn to produce progressively more sophisticated paragraph responses.

**English 8 Enriched** – This course continues with the in-depth curriculum in grammar systematically taught to enhance students' ability to speak and write using English conventions with negligible errors. In reading, ever-increasing fluency and stamina are emphasized by setting individual reading goals for students to complete independently. Enriched students are required to spend significantly more time reading and complete more pages each week than students in English 8. As a result, Enriched students must read at or above grade level to qualify for admission to the class. Using an online program, growth in reading levels is evaluated monthly, and progress toward Quarterly reading goals is monitored. In-class reading and writing instruction focuses on understanding and responding to non-fiction and fiction reading selections. In accordance with Common Core goals and standards, students receive instruction in how to seek increasingly deeper understanding of what they read and improve the clarity and completeness with which they respond in writing. Enriched students are stretched to respond to some higher level questions that require greater depth of thought than those in English 8. Students are expected to apply the grammar concepts being taught as they learn to produce progressively more sophisticated paragraph responses.

**Math 7** – The focus of this course is to continue to build the foundation necessary for success in the study of algebra. The instruction will be rigorous and concentrate on developing particular skills as defined by the Common Learning Standards. The quality of work will allow students to gain a deeper understanding of the concepts and become fluent in the application, as well as make connections between the theoretical processes and real-world applications. Students will concentrate on the following domains: integers and rational numbers, expressions, equations and inequalities, ratios and proportional relationships, percent and proportional relationships, geometry, and statistics and probability.

**Accelerated Math 7** – This course differs from the standard Math 7 and Math 8 courses in that it contains content from both courses. This course is intended for the student who is able to comprehend mathematics quickly and still master the full range of mathematical practices, content and skills. Instructional time in the Accelerated Math 7 course focuses on the following grade 7 critical areas: (1) developing understanding of and applying proportional relationships, including percentages; (2) developing understanding of operations with rational numbers and working with expressions and linear equations; (3) solving problems involving scale drawings and informal geometric constructions and working with two- and three-dimensional shapes to solve problems involving area, surface area, and volume; and (4) drawing inferences about populations based on samples. In addition, the following critical areas from Grade 8 will be included: (1) formulating and reasoning about expressions and equations; (2) analyzing two- and three-dimensional space and figures using distance, angle, similarity, and congruence. The instruction will be rigorous and concentrate on developing various skills. Students will be required to demonstrate fluency in application and conceptual understanding. Therefore, entrance in the course requires mastery of Math 6 and above grade level

performance on online assessments. A student who is successful in this course will be prepared to take Algebra 1 in 8<sup>th</sup> grade.

**Math 8** – Math 8 is a course designed as a bridge to Algebra and Geometry. It provides students with an introduction to the concepts of algebra and geometry, and at the same time solidifies their grasp of arithmetic concepts and procedures. This course prepares students for the year-long Algebra 1 course in high school (grade 9). The focus of this course is building the foundation necessary for success in the study of algebra. The instruction will concentrate on the following common core domains: the number system (8.NS), expressions and equations (8.EE), functions (8.F), geometry principles as applied in Algebra (8.G), and an introduction to bi-variate statistics (8.SP). A student who is successful with this program should be ready to take Algebra I as a ninth grader.

**Algebra 1** – Algebra I is a one year course designed to take the student from the basic abstract thought processes of Accelerated Math 7 to the introductory level areas of Algebra II. The eighth grade Algebra 1 course is a continuation of the seventh grade-accelerated course. As a result, the prerequisite for this course is successful completion of Acc. Math 7. In addition, students must demonstrate above grade level proficiency on standardized testing measure for entrance into the course. This second year course focuses on more advanced topics from the Algebra 1 domains. The instruction will be rigorous and concentrate on developing a particular skill and text. The following topics will be covered: real numbers, linear equations with one and two variables, quadratic equations, and systems of equations, functions, coordinate geometry, and bi-variate data analysis. Successful completion of this course will allow students to enroll in Geometry in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade.

### Elective Courses

**ASB/Yearbook** – In this course, the primary responsibilities of the Officers include communicating with the Student Body and representing Student Body, as well as the planning and production of all-school activities. In the process, we seek to promote citizenship, scholarship, leadership, and human relations. While organizing and promoting various events is the main focus of the class, students will be expected to complete some specific academic assignments as well. Our goal is engagement. We want to offer enough different events that every student will have found something that appeals to him or her personally. The yearbook portion of the course has been designed to provide students with journalism skills and the ability to apply those skills to the actual production of the yearbook. Units of study include teamwork, responsibility, brainstorming, content, coverage, concept, reporting, writing, headlines, captions, editing, photography, typography, design, graphics, finances, yearbook campaigns, advertising and distribution. Actual work results in the current volume of the school's yearbook. The publication strives to maintain a tradition of excellence in which the school and the community can take pride. *This is a year-long course and requires teacher approval.*

**Career Technical Ed (CTE)** - The College & Career Ready course provides a student experience that develops career ready practices through career exploration in the context of project based learning. All knowledge and skills are based on industry sector and pathway standards to promote collect and career readiness. This is especially important in grades 7-9 because without a robust experience at this level many students enter high school unaware of what careers may be best for them. Students will: work productively in small teams of 2, use technology to enhance productivity, plan education and career paths, utilize critical thinking, define problems and persevere in solving them, demonstrate creativity and innovation, employ valid and reliable research methods, and apply appropriate academic & technical skills. Every unit requires that students submit evidence of learning for each project, write in context (narrative & argumentative), complete 2 objective assessments, and present design brief solutions to the class as proof of knowledge and skill attainment.

**Journalism/Creative Writing** – Journalism/Creative Writing is geared to the highly motivated student who desires a firm background in journalistic technique and writing for publication. The Journalism portion of this course will cover the essential ingredients of newspaper writing including: news stories, features, editorials, and headlines. The course will also stress the techniques of observation, interviewing, reporting, and ethics in the media. In addition, proofreading, editing, and a newspaper layout will be covered. The Creative Writing portion of this course will expose students to a variety of writing genres and require them to understand, analyze, imitate and then produce pieces of writing, which conform to these genres. Students will experience the benefits of creative expression through crafting and revising their own short stories, poems, and non-fiction essays. The creative writing process will be emphasized, as will be teacher, peer and self-critique in a non-judgmental environment. Students will write, revise, critique, and publish their own creative works, and articles while learning to use graphic design software to produce a school newsletter. *This is a semester-long course.*

**Study Skills** – The Reading Lab is designed to advance students' appreciation of and literacy in reading to support the school's Strategic Research Based Interventions Program. The course aims to provide students with strategies and skills that proficient, critical, and close readers bring to any text, of which may include but are not limited to decoding multisyllabic words, reading fluently, summarizing main ideas, asking questions of texts and fellow classmates, engaging in discussion, developing individual vocabulary, and making connections. Students will read and discuss literary and non-fiction texts from multiple genres, which will be both teacher- and student-selected and will be addressed independently, in small groups, and as a whole class. Writing in a reading class may include personal response journaling, recording and tracing information and details for discussion and analysis, reflecting upon the reading process or use of a strategy or skill, and exploring key concepts, ideas, or inquiries discovered in the context of reading. The Math Lab portion of the course is to reinforce concepts and skills necessary to be successful at Math. The curriculum spans a wide range of topics; but special emphasis is given to decimal, fraction, algebra, integer and percent operations. Since this is a second Math class, in addition to a student's "regular" Math class, topics are timed in a way where they are covered before, or after, students practice them in the regular Math classes to help them master the skills. *This is a semester-long course.*

**Visual Arts** – Art class is a place to learn, explore, and create, to build knowledge and confidence for future use in life. In class the students will: create drawings with the understanding of realistic rendering, create paintings that explore personal meaning and artistic styles, continue to analyze, understand and implement the elements and principles of design into their finished art projects. Various projects will focus upon the importance of art in our everyday life, how the visual arts enhance and influence career opportunities, and the importance of art in other cultures and Historical periods. This is a beginning art class in which students will learn about line, shape, value, perspective, design, and color. This class focuses on learning drawing skills, and various drawing media; including pencil, pen, charcoal, and paint. A positive creative environment will be maintained with respect for everyone's creative efforts. *This is a semester-long course.*