



Course Descriptions

8th Grade





Dear Parents and Students,

Welcome to Brenham Junior High School. Our goal is for each student to be successful in their academic studies as well as their extra-curricular activities. This course selection guide is designed to help you and your child choose the best academic path for junior high and also to enable them to begin preparing for Brenham High School.

Our faculty and staff are available to help you and your child in any way possible. Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions or concerns.

PUBLIC EDUCATION IN TEXAS

CURRICULUM REQUIREMENTS

The direction for public education in Texas is driven by the legislature and is delegated to the State Board of Education as the chief governing body of public schools in Texas.

The philosophy of the State Board of Education established the framework for the goals of public-school education. Public education is responsible for providing each student with the opportunity for development of knowledge, skills, and competencies that every student should possess to be a self-supporting, self-governing, and contributing member of society. A primary purpose of the curriculum must also be to prepare thoughtful, active citizens who understand the importance of patriotism, can function productively in a free enterprise society, and appreciate the basic democratic values of our national heritage.

CURRICULUM REQUIREMENTS

Our Junior High provides a multiple period day for instruction, and most students will enroll in eight classes. Course requirements mandated by the Texas Education Agency require students to enroll in English, Math, Science, and Social Studies. Elective Classes have the following requirements:

- BISD Students in grade 8 are required to take Health and Dollars and Sense.
- Students in grade 8 will choose 3 additional elective

GRADING

The state grading scale is as follows:

90 - 100	A
80 - 89	B
70 - 79	C
69 - below	F

PROMOTION POLICY

In grades 2-8, promotion to the next grade level shall be based on an overall average of 70 on a scale of 100 based on course-level, grade-level standards (essential knowledge and skills) for all **core** subject areas and a grade of 70 or above in reading/language arts and mathematics.

The parent or guardian of each student who has not successfully completed a subject or course for the year shall be notified by the district as soon as practical of any summer program available in the district that may permit the student to successfully complete the failed subjects or courses.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS FOR EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

A student may participate in extracurricular activities by having a passing grade of 70 in ALL subjects and by meeting the other requirements set by local and state policy.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

Students with disabilities may be eligible for and need special education services. BISD offers a wide range of instructional options for students with disabilities through services designed to meet unique education needs. These instructional options range from placement in the general education classroom with support services to placement in specialized classes. Students with disabilities may also be eligible for and need certain related services that may be necessary for the student to benefit from special education instruction.

An ARD Committee that includes the student, parents, administrators, counselors, teachers, and special education personnel makes all special education programming decisions for individual students.

ALTERNATIVE SELECTIONS – ELECTIVES

Students must select alternate selections in order to ensure a complete schedule. Every attempt will be made to honor students' first choices; but due to physical limitations, maximum class sizes may need to be imposed.

CREDIT BY EXAM WITHOUT PRIOR INSTRUCTION

Students wanting information regarding credit by exam without prior instruction should contact the counseling office. Students may not use credit by exams to gain credit when credit has been denied for excessive absences or when a student has received prior instruction over the material tested. Please Note: *CREDIT BY EXAM DATES for the 2022-2023 school year will be announced on the BISD website.*

THE STATE OF TEXAS ASSESSMENTS OF ACADEMIC READINESS (STAAR)

The STAAR program includes annual assessments for grades 3–8 in reading language arts and mathematics; in science at grades 5 and 8; and in social studies at grade 8; and end-of-course assessment for Algebra I.

Districts are required to provide acceleration to any student who fails a STAAR assessment, whether in grades 3-8 or high school. Students may be placed in a Math and/or Reading Lab Course in order to fulfill the state requirements, if they do not complete acceleration in summer school.

ADVANCED CLASSES

Brenham ISD acknowledges that student participation in advanced coursework is valuable. BISD encourages all willing and/or academically prepared students to participate in advanced courses. Advanced courses are designed to prepare students for college-level courses, like AP and Dual Credit, in high school. Participation in advanced courses is a foundation of college readiness. Students who participate in AP coursework are more likely to complete a bachelor's degree in college and typically have higher college GPAs.

Choosing Advanced Academics:

Advanced courses in Brenham Independent School District are designed to challenge students beyond level coursework. Indicators for success in advanced coursework are located below each course description as recommended placement criteria. While we expect students to be successful in all advanced coursework, a close look at the student's total course load and commitment to other activities should also be considered when choosing how many advanced courses to take. For some students, the best path is to start by enrolling in one advanced course, so that they better understand the expectation of advanced coursework. The decision to enroll in advanced classes ultimately rests with the parents and the students.

Students who are willing and/or academically prepared may consider enrolling in the following classes:

- Advanced English Language Arts
- Algebra
- Advanced Science
- Advanced Texas History

SCHEDULE CHANGES

The master schedule is based on the courses requested by students. After selecting required courses, students should choose electives and alternates carefully. Those decisions are binding. Schedules are determined by course selections; therefore, schedule changes will only be made if:

- Student scheduled for a class for which he/she already has credit
- Student is scheduled into a class for which student does not have a prerequisite
- Student not enrolled in an audition course for which they were approved
- Balancing of class size
- Student has an incomplete schedule
- Student is cut from any extracurricular program within the deadline
- ARD/504 Committee decision
- Student must have a Fine Art credit
- Student must have a PE credit
- Students must be enrolled in a Math/Reading Lab course

The following requests will not be approved:

- Requests for a teacher change
- Requests for a lunch change
- Requests to drop a course after the drop deadline
- Requests for a class period change

Procedures to request a schedule change:

Students must complete and turn in the Schedule Change Request Form, which is available in the counseling office, no later than 10 days after the first day of school. Until your concern is addressed, **YOU MUST FOLLOW YOUR CURRENT SCHEDULE**. No student is to leave a class for a schedule concern unless sent for by a counselor. Requests that are NOT turned in by the deadline stated on the form will not be honored.

HOW TO HANDLE A TEACHER CONCERN

Students or parents who have a teacher concern should first contact the appropriate staff member. The most direct route to resolving a concern is to confer directly with the person involved, whether it be a teacher, coach, or sponsor, etc. Over 95% of concerns are handled at this level. If the outcome of the discussion is not satisfactory, they should request a conference with their child's assistant principal. Please note that the previous steps cannot be scheduled on the same day in order to ensure that adequate time is available for the assistant principal to obtain relative information from the student and teacher in question. If not satisfied at that level, they can request a conference with the principal or designee.

ACADEMIC COURSES

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

8TH GRADE ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

Eighth grade English Language Arts will integrate the elements of literature, rhetoric, and the writing and research processes. Communication skills such as listening, speaking, and reading will also be emphasized. Instruction covers all 8th grade Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills – developing skills and concepts for the depth of understanding.

8TH GRADE ADV. ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

In addition to having a considerably faster pace than the level eighth grade English Language Arts curriculum, a greater variety of literature and writing assignments will be implemented in the accelerated classes. The expectations of the teacher and demands on the students are much greater. Research projects, oral presentations, self-initiated learning, and critical thinking are required. This course will lay the groundwork and foundation for success in the Honors and dual credit programs at the high school level and ultimately in college coursework. Instruction covers all 8th grade Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills – developing skills and concepts for the depth of understanding.

The recommended requirements for 8th grade Adv. English Language Arts could be but are not limited to:

- Identified as a Gifted/Talented student
- 85 course average (or higher) in 7th grade Language Arts
- Masters Level on STAAR Reading
- MAP scores reflect Meets or Masters in reading

MATH

8TH GRADE MATHEMATICS

Eighth grade mathematics is one step in the sequential organization of the mathematics program. This course provides students with a transitional stage in their math journey that is crucial to their success in Algebra and beyond. Instruction covers all 8th grade Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills – developing skills and concepts for the depth of understanding. It includes rich problem-solving that requires students to think critically and make important math connections.

ALGEBRA I (Prerequisite: Pre-Algebra)

Algebra is designed for the student who intends to take Calculus in high school. This very rigorous and challenging course that requires a keen aptitude for problem solving and abstract concepts. Students must have 90 % or higher in Pre-Algebra. STAAR scores will be reviewed for placement in this class. This is an advanced high school class that will count towards the student's class rank and high school GPA. **Students who are failing this course at the end of a 6 weeks period will automatically be moved to 8th grade math. The grade earned in this course WILL count as a high school credit.**

SCIENCE

8TH GRADE SCIENCE

This course is an integrated unit of study with a focus on Earth Science concepts. These concepts include atoms and the periodic table, force and motion, Newton's Laws, plate tectonics, weather, ocean water and life, environmental concerns, chemical reactions, the moon, space and stars. The Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills of 8th grade science will be addressed in the class

8TH GRADE ADV SCIENCE

This course follows the Science curriculum and is aligned with the TEKS. The material is covered more quickly than regular Science and in greater depth and complexity. This course will require projects that will reinforce topics covered throughout the school year. Note: **Outside projects are required for this course.**

The recommended requirements for 8th grade Adv. Science could be but are not limited to:

- Identified as a Gifted/Talented student
- 85 course average (or higher) in 7th grade science
- MAP Scores reflect Meets or Masters in Reading and Math

SOCIAL STUDIES

8TH GRADE AMERICAN HISTORY

This course is the study of the history of the United States from the early colonial period through the reconstruction period. Instruction covers all 8th grade Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills – developing skills and concepts for the depth of understanding.

8TH GRADE ADVANCED AMERICAN HISTORY

This course is the study of the history of the United States from the early colonial period through the reconstruction period. This content will be covered in greater depth, complexity and at a faster pace than regular American History. Instruction covers all 8th grade Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills – developing skills and concepts for the depth of understanding. **Note: All enrolled students must participate in History Fair.**

The recommended requirements for 8th grade Adv.American History could be but are not limited to:

- Identified as a Gifted/Talented student
- 85 course average (or higher) in 7th grade Reading and Texas History
- MAP Scores reflect Meets or Masters in Reading

OTHER REQUIRED COURSES

Health and Financial Literacy Requirement

To meet the state curriculum requirements of the Texas Education Code, we are requiring all 8th grade students to take a semester course in Health. This course provides an introduction to health and facts which develop proper attitudes, establish practices and habits that will contribute to personal, family, and community health. During the opposite semester, students will take *Dollars and Sense. This course focuses on basic financial literacy, such as managing family and personal budgets, setting financial goals, consumer spending, financial records, credit and others. **You do not need to register for these classes; your student will automatically be enrolled.**

**Dollars and Sense will count toward high school credit.*

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Please select **ONE** of the following if you would like to take an athletics or PE course

8TH GRADE PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Each student **must** dress out and participate in daily activities. Students will need to provide their own workout clothes. Activities include basketball, football, volleyball, fitness activities, ultimate running, jumping rope and other activities as equipment is available. A student's grade is based upon participation and dressing out.

OUTDOOR PHYSICAL EDUCATION

This is not your traditional PE course. Instead of teaching PE with basketballs and tennis rackets, students learn outdoor activities such as archery, fishing, outdoor cooking, survival skills, and games such as washers and cornhole . The Outdoor Adventure course is designed to change young people's lives forever by exposing them to the many great opportunities of the outdoors.

BOYS ATHLETICS

All students interested in football, basketball, and track are allowed to participate as long as they remain academically eligible and follow athletic policies. Practice times are before and/or after school and during the scheduled class period. Students will be provided practice clothes and uniforms for games. Students will be provided a locker to store and protect their clothing and valuables. Students will be responsible for providing their own locks. Each athlete must participate in at least one sport and must have a **physical prior to entering competition. Students must also complete Rank 1 on the computer.** This course will satisfy the PE requirement.

GIRLS ATHLETICS

All students interested in volleyball, basketball, and track are allowed to participate as long as they remain academically eligible and follow athletic policies. Practice times are before and/or after school and during the scheduled class period. Students will be provided practice clothes and uniforms for games. Students will be provided a locker to store and protect their clothing and valuables. Students will be responsible for providing their own locks. Each athlete must participate in at least one sport and must have a **physical prior to entering competition. Students must also complete Rank 1 on the computer.** This course will satisfy the PE requirement.

TENNIS

Students will learn about the game of tennis, how to play and how to keep score. Dressing out in athletic clothes, bringing your tennis racket and participating every day is mandatory. Competitive play is not required. After school practices and competition with schools in our area begin during the Spring Semester. The majority of a student's grade is based on participation and dressing out. Uniforms are provided for competition. Students will need to provide their own workout clothes, tennis racket and lock for a dressing room locker. **Each student must have a physical on file and complete Rank 1 on the computer.** This course will satisfy the PE requirement.

CROSS COUNTRY

Dressing out in athletic clothes and daily participation is mandatory. Students will begin endurance training beginning the first week of school, building up to 3 - 4 miles by November/December. Students will race in 4 or 5 meets (held on Saturdays) in the Fall. Each race is 2 miles. Uniforms are provided for competitions. **Each student must have a physical on file and complete Rank 1 on the computer.**

During the track season in the Spring, students may choose the event they wish to train for and compete in. They will compete in 4 or 5 meets in the Spring (held on Fridays or Saturdays). The majority of a student's grade is based on participation and dressing out. **Each student must have a physical on file and complete Rank 1 on the computer.** This course will satisfy the PE requirement.

SWIMMING

This class will teach the skills and techniques designed to prepare athletes to swim on the BHS level. Practices will be before and/or after school. (Swimsuits and goggles MUST be purchased by the swimmers.) Some meets will be held during the Spring. **Each student must have a physical on file and complete Rank 1 on the computer prior to the start of the school year.** This course will satisfy the PE requirement.

GOLF

This class will focus on the fundamentals of golf. Travel to the golf course on specified days will need to be provided by parents and new player tryouts will be required the 1st week in August. There will also be a \$50 course fee to cover the cost of golf shirts and hats. **Each student must have a physical on file and complete Rank 1 on the computer prior to the start of the school year.** This course will satisfy the PE requirement.

ELECTIVES COURSES

Please select **TWO** of the following if you chose an athletics or PE course

Please select **THREE** of the following if you did not choose an athletics or PE course

BAND

BJHS has 3 bands: 1 Symphonic Band and 2 Concert Bands. Each of these groups perform at pep rallies, at junior high football games, concerts, contests and the Maifest Parade. All students who sign up for band are placed into a specific band by the directors. They will receive information concerning instrument rental or purchase by a band director. **There will be a financial obligation with the class. (instrument purchase/rental, book(s), and supplies as needed.)**

CHOIR

Students will learn the basics of singing, sight-singing and choral performance. Choir students are expected to participate in Solo Competition and Region Choir auditions. This group also competes at UIL competitions. Concerts are usually held in the evening and are mandatory. Extra rehearsals will be held and are also mandatory.

ART

This course may be taken to fulfill the Fine Arts requirement for high school graduation. The student's grade in this class becomes a permanent part of their high school GPA and will be used to determine class rank. Students receive basic instruction in design, drawing, painting, printmaking, ceramics and sculpture. Fundamental elements and principles of design will be introduced in this course. Students will use a variety of media and techniques in producing their art work. Students will be required to purchase some art supplies for this course; supplies are available at local stores.

THEATER ARTS

This course may be taken to fulfill the Fine Arts requirement for high school graduation. The student's grade in this class becomes a permanent part of their high school GPA and will be used to determine class rank.

ADVANCED THEATER ARTS

Prerequisite: Audition and Theater Teacher Recommendation This course is for the serious theater arts student who plans to continue to study theater arts in high school. Students will participate in plays and use more advanced techniques of acting.

DANCE

This is an introductory course that provides the students with an exploration of basic movement fundamentals: ballet, jazz, hip-hop, modern lyrical, contemporary, world dance and choreography. **\$30 class fee.** Information regarding the purchasing of all required dance attire will be addressed by the instructor. Dance performances may be required in venues after school. This course will satisfy the PE requirement. **Each student must have a physical on file and complete Rank 1 on the computer.**

BRENEDIERS

This course requires an audition. Students will learn dance elements, movement, time, space, rhythm, shape and energy. Students will be expected to perform at pep rallies, football games, competitions, and the Spring Show. Information regarding the required dance attire will be addressed by the instructor; additional fees will be required. **Each student must have a physical on file and complete Rank 1 on the computer.** This course will satisfy the PE requirement.

CHEER

Cheer Prerequisite: Spring Audition and Selection Based on Judges Scores

This cheerleading course trains participants in most aspects of cheerleading and prepares the squad to cheer and support a multitude of campus events such as girl's and boy's athletics, pep rallies, and other activities. Emphasis is placed on promoting positive school spirit, strong leadership skills, safety, flexibility, as well as proper cheer techniques. Students are required to attend summer camp and participation at selected outside of school events (i.e. football, basketball, volleyball) is required. This course counts as a PE credit. **Each student must have a physical on file and complete Rank 1 on the computer.**

Note: Cheer gear and a uniform is required. Payment must be made when placing your cheer uniform order.

AVID

An elective course that prepares students for college readiness and success. Students participate in activities that incorporate strategies focused on writing, inquiry, collaboration, organization and reading to support their academic growth. Students must apply for entry into this elective course. The process includes, but is not limited to, a written application and an oral interview. Grades, STAAR scores, attendance and behavior records are all reviewed as part of the process. **Students must fill out an application, be selected for an interview and selected by the AVID site team for acceptance.**

YEARBOOK

This course is for the serious student who enjoys working hard, being creative and meeting deadlines. Students will understand the individual and staff responsibilities of a publication team. Students will apply Journalism writing basics, photojournalism, desktop publishing and creative thinking skills toward publication of the school yearbook. Students will also understand and apply the financial and leadership obligations of yearbook production.

PRINCIPLES OF APPLIED ENGINEERING

This course provides an overview of the various fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics and their interrelationships. Students will develop engineering communication skills, which include computer graphics, modeling, and presentations, by using a variety of computer hardware and software applications to complete assignments and projects. Upon completing this course, students will understand the various fields of engineering and will be able to make informed career decisions. Further, students will have worked on a design team to develop a product or system. Students will use multiple software applications to prepare and present course assignments. **This course will count toward high school credit.**

SPANISH I

This introductory course teaches basic language patterns and vocabulary. Repetition and comprehensible input are important components of this course. Focus is on all four language skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing. Culture is an integral part of the course and is introduced through the use of media, games, adapted readings and class discussions. In addition to written tests and quizzes, students will also be assessed by means of oral activities. Completion of homework assignments is a must. Active participation is required. **This course will count toward high school credit.**

BROADCAST JOURNALISM

This course teaches students about broadcast preparation and delivery. Students will use various forms of media to communicate school, community and world events to the student body. This is a yearlong course.