



Middle School
Electives 2019-2020

ARTS & ELECTIVES 2019-2020

Congressional School strives to provide students with experiences and learning opportunities to equip them for lifelong learning and future success. Congressional provides an educational frontier experience that encourages inquisitive young minds to ask questions, and, with just the right instruction and guidance, discover not only the answers but also their potential. Strong critical and creative thinking skills are key. Research indicates that exposing middle school students to a variety of different experiences can spark new interests and passions that often carry into their adult lives (Wagner, 2012). Here at Congressional, we have created a middle school electives program that provides student choice, a broad range of experiences, and allows for concentrations in different areas of study.

Core arts courses (general art, general music, and speech & drama) are on a trimester schedule. Students in all middle school grade levels (5-8) are required to take each of these courses each year as a credit requirement for graduation from Congressional. Arts courses meet 3 times per six-day rotation. Financial Literacy is a required course for all middle school students, meeting 2 times per six-day rotation for one quarter. One additional requirement for Congressional's 8th grade students is a high school decisions class, meeting 2 times per six-day rotation for the first quarter of the school year. During this time, admissions representatives from various high schools will visit, and students will have the opportunity to focus on their preparations and applications for high school.

Choice electives are offered in grades 6-8. Students in grade 6 and 7 will take **3 choice electives per year, for one quarter each**. Students in grade 8 will take **2 choice electives, for one quarter each**. Choice electives meet 2 times per six-day rotation. Choice electives are offered by grade and by expressed student interest. Not all electives will be available every quarter.

Fifth grade students take the core arts courses, one quarter of financial literacy, and three quarters of Computing and Innovation. Here students learn the basics of programming and robotics and will also learn what design thinking is and how to apply it to engineering tasks.

Arts Course Descriptions – Grade 5

General Art 5

Students will develop skills and learn new tools through a variety of projects designed to increase problem solving and communication through visual expression. Each student will continue to make connections between art, culture and other subject areas while learning to articulate and recognize constant themes in art and building their art vocabulary. While developing their own ideas throughout the entire studio process, students will be able to appreciate the enjoyment of making thoughtful choices for self-expression. Projects may explore drawing, painting, collage, printmaking, sculpture, and other traditional and non-traditional art practices.

General Music 5

Students will use critical thinking skills to better understand music. Students will perform a variety of musical genres via an eclectic array of instrumental and vocal repertoire. Students will also create original music as individuals and as an ensemble while using classroom instruments and the Garage Band app on their iPads. As students gain musical knowledge, they will become informed consumers and music advocates. Throughout our music-making process, students will begin to make connections between musical components and other core subjects. Students will also be exposed to music of other cultures, and develop an appreciation for the role of music in society.

Speech & Drama 5 -- Through the Speech curriculum, Middle School students develop critical skills that they carry forward into high school, college, and career. More than just giving students an opportunity to practice their public speaking skills, this class provides an environment for students to build confidence, write for specific purposes, and improve their expressive communication.

Specific work in fifth grade focuses on establishing a foundation of effective verbal and nonverbal communication techniques while developing and delivering informative speeches. The fifth grade drama curriculum introduces students to the various aspects of this art form, which they will have the opportunity to pursue through choice electives in grades 6-8.

Financial Literacy – Grade 5

In this first course, students will be introduced to the worlds of finance, economics, and entrepreneurship students through project-based, hands-on learning. Personal finance concepts explore what it means to be smart with money; emphasizes three reasons to save money; compares simple interest and compound interest; explains the purpose of a budget; identifies the difference between debit and credit cards; explores how to talk about money and money goals; and highlights the importance and benefits of giving and serving others.

Arts Course Descriptions – Grade 6

General Art 6 -- In sixth grade students will continue to engage in an art practice to challenge themselves to use art as a medium for communication and self-expression. A variety of media and techniques will be introduced and used for assignments. Students will continue to study artists, a variety of cultures, and subject areas to provide relevance and connections to ground their practice. Students will also analyze how their own choices influence the content of their artwork and articulate how their own designs can contain meaningful ideas and symbols. Projects may explore drawing, painting, collage, printmaking, sculpture, and other traditional and non-traditional art practices.

General Music 6 – Students will use critical thinking skills to better understand music, as well as gain an appreciation for music in its many forms. Students will learn about and perform a variety of musical genres via an eclectic array of instrumental and vocal repertoire. Students will also create original music as individuals and as an ensemble while using classroom instruments and the Garage Band app on their iPads. As students gain musical knowledge, they will become informed consumers and music advocates. Throughout our music-making process, students will begin to make connections between musical components and other core

subjects. Students will be exposed to music of other cultures, genres, and develop an appreciation for the role of music in society.

Speech & Drama 6 -- Through the Speech curriculum, Middle School students develop critical skills that they carry forward into high school, college, and career. More than just giving students an opportunity to practice their public speaking skills, this class provides an environment for students to build confidence, write for specific purposes, and improve their expressive communication.

In sixth grade, students incorporate visual elements into public speaking and gain experience giving a demonstration to their peers. Students also transition from fully-scripted speeches to notes and bullet points as prompts for their presentations. During sixth grade, students will demonstrate active listening strategies, analyze organization of content, language, and word choice in oral presentations, and continue to use self-evaluation to improve speaking skills.

Financial Literacy – Grade 6

First, students will be introduced to the worlds of finance, economics, and entrepreneurship students through project-based, hands-on learning. Personal finance concepts explore what it means to be smart with money; emphasizes three reasons to save money; compares simple interest and compound interest; explains the purpose of a budget; identifies the difference between debit and credit cards; explores how to talk about money and money goals; and highlights the importance and benefits of giving and serving others.

In addition students will explore the historical drivers behind our global business culture and how economic opportunity has shaped the international flow of human resources, information, cultural exchange and financial capital, enabling them to better appreciate and apply knowledge of the global economy to their daily lives.

Arts Course Descriptions – Grade 7

General Art 7 -- Seventh grade students will use art to focus on the development of skills and ideas, through investigation and experimentation. With units based in a variety of art mediums and techniques, students will also be guided into critically thinking about the work of other artists and their own by analyzing and evaluating historical, technical and aesthetics of art. Students will collect ideas, work collaboratively, and maintain sketchbooks to consider directions for creating artwork. By balancing planning, experimenting, making, and evaluating throughout the entire studio process, students will be able to formulate deeper connections to the work they make and the work of others. Projects may explore drawing, painting, collage, printmaking, sculpture, and other traditional and non-traditional art practices.

General Music 7 – Students will use critical thinking skills to better understand music. Students will perform a variety of musical genres via an eclectic array of instrumental and vocal repertoire. Students will also create original music as individuals and as an ensemble while using classroom instruments and the Garage Band app on their iPads. As students gain musical knowledge, they will become informed consumers and music advocates. Throughout our music-making process, students will begin to make connections between musical components and other core subjects. Students will be exposed to music of other cultures, and develop an appreciation for the role of music in society.

Speech & Drama 7 -- Through the Speech curriculum, Middle School students develop critical skills that they carry forward into high school, college, and career. More than just giving students an opportunity to practice their public speaking skills, this class provides an environment for students to build confidence, write for specific purposes, and improve their expressive communication.

Seventh grade students continue developing and improving communication skills while incorporating figurative language, giving and seeking information in discussions, and supporting a position while acknowledging opposing viewpoints in full-class debate. Speeches are persuasive and inspirational in nature. During seventh grade, students will analyze ideas and opinions to determine relevancy, identify relationship between verbal and nonverbal messages in presentations, and continue to use self-evaluation to improve speaking skills.

Financial Literacy – Grade 7

Students will be introduced to the worlds of finance, economics, and entrepreneurship students through project-based, hands-on learning. Personal finance concepts explore what it means to be smart with money; emphasizes three reasons to save money; compares simple interest and compound interest; explains the purpose of a budget; identifies the difference between debit and credit cards; explores how to talk about money and money goals; and highlights the importance and benefits of giving and serving others.

Students will then explore the global marketplace using both a blended learning approach of classroom activities and simulation. Through completion of this elective students will gain an understanding of producers and consumers in the interconnected global market. They will analyze the similarities and differences among countries and the effects of free enterprise. In addition students will also participate in the Stock Market Game, a middle school and high school activity where students are “given” \$100,000 to invest.

Arts Course Descriptions – Grade 8

General Art 8 -- In eighth grade, students will continue to become familiar with a variety of art and design concepts, techniques and mediums by working directly with materials. Through the exploration of traditional and non-traditional art practices students will be able to work from observation and imagination. Students will relate their projects to personal experiences and identities and continue to explore ideas by keeping a regular sketchbook, working collaboratively with peers and participating in classroom discussions about artists, culture, and other areas. Students will also formulate and answer their own questions about art throughout the entire studio process by participating in classroom “critiques” and writing. These kinds of practices will strengthen their connection to their own art practice and understanding of how art can relate to our daily lives.

General Music 8 – Students will use critical thinking skills to better understand music, as well as gain an appreciation for music in its many forms. Students will learn about and perform a variety of musical genres via an eclectic array of instrumental and vocal repertoire. Students will also create original music as individuals and as an ensemble while using classroom instruments and the Garage Band app on their iPads. As students gain musical knowledge, they will become informed consumers and music advocates. Throughout our music-making process, students will begin to make connections between musical components and other core

subjects. Students will be exposed to music of other cultures, genres, and develop an appreciation for the role of music in society.

Speech & Drama 8 -- Through the Speech curriculum, Middle School students develop critical skills that they carry forward into high school, college, and career. More than just giving students an opportunity to practice their public speaking skills, this class provides an environment for students to build confidence, write for specific purposes, and improve their expressive communication.

Eighth grade is the culmination of the students' work in Speech. Public speaking assignments call for impromptu speaking, paraphrasing, clarifying and expanding on topics, and incorporating visual media. A full unit on formal debate provides an opportunity to demonstrate reasoning skills, persuasive speaking techniques, and effective collaboration through team debate. During eighth grade, students will ask probing questions to elicit information, analyze credibility of information and messages, participate in formal team debate (using Middle School Public Debate Program format), and continue to use self-evaluation to improve speaking skills.

Financial Literacy – Grade 8

Students will be introduced to the worlds of finance, economics, and entrepreneurship students through project-based, hands-on learning. Personal finance concepts explore what it means to be smart with money; emphasizes three reasons to save money; compares simple interest and compound interest; explains the purpose of a budget; identifies the difference between debit and credit cards; explores how to talk about money and money goals; and highlights the importance and benefits of giving and serving others.

Students will then explore the global marketplace using both a blended learning approach of classroom activities and simulation. Through completion of this elective students will gain an understanding of producers and consumers in the interconnected global market. They will analyze the similarities and differences among countries and the effects of free enterprise. In addition students will also participate in the Stock Market Game, a middle school and high school activity where students are “given” \$100,000 to invest.

High School Decisions – Grade 8

The High School Decisions course is designed to help guide and support students as they identify and apply to high school. Students spend several classes meeting Admissions Representatives from various high schools, including independent and religious high schools. These meetings are an opportunity to learn more about some of the more popular high schools that Congressional graduates attend. Students will also receive information about and some support with essay writing, interviewing skills, visits to high schools (shadow visits) and time management. High School Decisions meets two times on the rotation during the choice elective block in the first quarter.

Choice Electives

Art Electives

Mixed Media

Students will discover ways to mix different techniques and media to express and communicate ideas. Mixed media techniques allow students to take a liberated approach when creating a new composition. Working with unexpected and surprising processes can lead to strategies that allow students to practice problem solving and think critically. Students will learn a variety of ways to create backgrounds, add texture, use repurposed materials, add layers, and use stamps that will create a mood or feeling in their own art.

Printmaking

So many things that we use in this world on a day-to-day basis are printed by large machines. In this class, students will view printing as an art that is crafted by the hand. By practicing design, transferring the design, and printing, students will be exposed to the labor it takes to create a handmade print. Students will practice traditional and modern types of printing that will allow students to experiment and create original designs. Students will learn the advantages and limitations for each practice and will then be able to examine and relate how these processes could be used in the real world.

Drama Electives

Acting

Using scenes, monologues, and other acting exercises, students will develop their performance skills, including the use of voice and body to create a character. If you enjoy the acting work we do in Speech & Drama and want to do more, this is an opportunity to explore theatrical performance in more depth.

Technical Theater

In the first half of this elective, students will learn the principles of theatrical design, exploring the areas of scenery, props, costumes, lighting, and sound. With this foundation of knowledge, students will create and submit designs for at least one aspect of the school musical. Finally, students will begin executing the designs that are selected, helping to build, paint, select, and organize various items that will be seen onstage in March.

Music Electives

Guitar

Learn how to play the guitar or improve your current skills. We'll work on chords, melodies, improvisation, and composition. We will use our classroom set of acoustic guitars while learning songs of various genres, and also improve skills reading tablature and music notation. This elective will perform at the winter and spring concerts, along with other events.

Jam Sesh

This unique course will allow students to experience what it is like to be in their own band. Students will learn to play various pieces of music of their choosing, and will have the option to play songs on different instruments such as the guitar, keyboard, Orff barred instruments, the bass, percussion, vocals, and perhaps a bit of electronic layering via the Roli Lightpad Block and Seaboard music apps. Lastly, students will be able to choose a band name and design a logo for the group!

Design and Engineering Electives

Robotics

Students will learn the ins and outs of programming for robot locomotion, robot sensing, along with building machines for specific tasks. Design thinking will be the foundation, as students are incrementally exposed to more challenging tasks. Challenges may include road following, doing small tasks, multiple robot cooperation, and autonomous exploration. Students will work towards possibly competing in the FIRST® LEGO League competition. Teams participate in the Challenge by programming an autonomous robot to score points on a themed playing field (Robot Game).

Design Lab

Students will use the Stanford University D-School model of design thinking to innovate and create solutions to a problem of their choice. Design thinking utilizes elements from the designer's toolkit like empathy and experimentation to arrive at innovative solutions. Prototyping and tinkering are key components in the design process.

Other Electives

Congressional News - 6th Grade Only

Students will gain experience in front of and behind the camera in this elective, taking on all of the roles necessary to create a news broadcast. While creating short-form news briefs, as well as in-depth reports, students will serve as writers, producers, directors, editors, and broadcasters. Student work will be shared at gatherings and through Congressional's various social media outlets.

Cooking & Baking 101 - 7th Grade Only

In this hands-on elective, students will gain experience in the basic skills needed for cooking and baking. Areas covered will include knife technique, proper measuring, techniques for cooking meats and vegetables, and important kitchen safety.

Cooking & Baking 201 - 8th Grade Only

Continue to build on the knowledge and skills covered in Cooking & Baking 101, and branch out beyond recipes to incorporate your own creativity and instincts in the kitchen. Students will have more opportunities to put their personal touches on dishes that they create with provided ingredients.

Life Skills - 6th Grade Only

Get a head start on "adulting" by learning some basic skills that everyone should possess. Do you know how to reattach a button, pot a plant, tie a tie, set the table, wash and fold a load of laundry, or assemble a piece of Swedish furniture? Learn how to do all of these things, and much more (including a little basic cooking) in this new elective.

Yearbook

In this course students will gain skills in one or more of the following areas: page design, publishing techniques, copy writing, editing and photography while producing a creative, innovative yearbook which records school memories and events. There is an emphasis on journalism skills in this class! Participants gain useful, real world skills in time management, marketing, teamwork, and design principles.

**SIXTH GRADE ELECTIVES
2019-2020**

First Quarter

Please number the electives 1-4. Number 1 should be your first choice, #2 should be your second choice, #3 your third choice etc. up to number 4. We will make every effort to place you in your top choices. Please choose classes based upon your interest.

_____	Financial Literacy	NAME: _____
_____	Jam Sesh (1 quarter)	ADVISOR: _____
_____	Technical Theater	GRADE: 6
_____	Yearbook	

- Financial Literacy -

All students are required to take one quarter of Financial Literacy. It is being offered 1st quarter and 2nd quarter for 6th grade. About half of the grade level will be in the class each quarter.

Second Quarter

If you didn't select Financial Literacy as your top choice for First Quarter, you must select it as your top choice for this quarter.

Please number the electives 1-6. Number 1 should be your first choice, #2 should be your second choice, #3 your third choice etc. up to number 6. We will make every effort to place you in your top choices. Please choose classes based upon your interest.

_____	Financial Literacy
_____	Acting
_____	Design Lab (1 quarter)
_____	Guitar
_____	Robotics
_____	Yearbook

**SIXTH GRADE ELECTIVES
2019-2020**

Third Quarter

Please number the electives 1-5. Number 1 should be your first choice, #2 should be your second choice, #3 your third choice etc. up to number 5. We will make every effort to place you in your top choices. Please choose classes based upon your interest.

Two-Quarter Options: If you sign up for one of the options below, you are committing to 3rd and 4th quarter

_____ Design Lab (2 quarters)

_____ Jam Sesh (2 quarters)

One-Quarter Options: If you sign up for one of the options below, it is for 3rd quarter only

_____ Broadcast News

_____ Printmaking

_____ Robotics

Fourth Quarter

Please number the electives 1-5. Number 1 should be your first choice, #2 should be your second choice, #3 your third choice etc. up to number 5. We will make every effort to place you in your top choices. Please choose classes based upon your interest.

Two-Quarter Options: Rank these with the same numbers you did for 3rd quarter

_____ Design Lab (2 quarters)

_____ Jam Sesh (2 quarters)

One-Quarter Options: If you sign up for one of the options below, it is for 4th quarter only

_____ Life Skills

_____ Mixed Media

_____ Robotics

I have reviewed and approve _____'s electives selections.

Parent Signature: _____ Date: _____

**SEVENTH GRADE ELECTIVES
2019-2020**

First Quarter

Please number the electives 1-4. Number 1 should be your first choice, #2 should be your second choice, #3 your third choice etc. up to number 4. We will make every effort to place you in your top choices. Please choose classes based upon your interest.

_____ **Financial Literacy**

NAME: _____

_____ Acting

ADVISOR: _____

_____ Jam Sesh (1 quarter)

GRADE: 7

_____ Yearbook

- Financial Literacy -

All students are required to take one quarter of Financial Literacy. It is being offered 1st quarter and 4th quarter for 7th grade. About half of the grade level will be in the class each quarter.

Second Quarter

Please number the electives 1-5. Number 1 should be your first choice, #2 should be your second choice, #3 your third choice etc. up to number 5. We will make every effort to place you in your top choices. Please choose classes based upon your interest.

Two-Quarter Options: If you sign up for one of the options below, you are committing to 2nd and 3rd quarter

_____ Design Lab (2 quarters)

_____ Jam Sesh (2 quarters)

One-Quarter Options: If you sign up for one of the options below, it is for 2nd quarter only

_____ Robotics

_____ Technical Theater

_____ Yearbook

**SEVENTH GRADE ELECTIVES
2019-2020**

Third Quarter

Please number the electives 1-5. Number 1 should be your first choice, #2 should be your second choice, #3 your third choice etc. up to number 5. We will make every effort to place you in your top choices. Please choose classes based upon your interest.

Two-Quarter Options: Rank these with the same numbers you did for 2nd quarter

_____ Design Lab (2 quarters)

_____ Jam Sesh (2 quarters)

One-Quarter Options: If you sign up for one of the options below, it is for 3rd quarter only

_____ Cooking & Baking 101

_____ Printmaking

_____ Robotics

<p>- Financial Literacy -</p> <p>All students are required to take one quarter of Financial Literacy. It is being offered 1st quarter and 4th quarter for 7th grade. About half of the grade level will be in the class each quarter.</p>

Fourth Quarter

If you didn't select Financial Literacy as your top choice for First Quarter, you must select it as your top choice for this quarter.

Please number the electives 1-6. Number 1 should be your first choice, #2 should be your second choice, #3 your third choice etc. up to number 6. We will make every effort to place you in your top choices. Please choose classes based upon your interest.

_____ **Financial Literacy**

_____ Cooking & Baking 101

_____ Design Lab (1 quarter)

_____ Jam Sesh (1 quarter)

_____ Mixed Media

_____ Robotics

I have reviewed and approve _____'s electives selections.

Parent Signature: _____ Date: _____

**EIGHTH GRADE ELECTIVES
2019-2020**

Eighth Grade students will take High School Decisions as a full grade level during First Quarter, and Financial Literacy as a full grade level during Fourth Quarter. Below are the options for Electives during quarters 2 & 3.

Second Quarter

Please number the electives 1-5. Number 1 should be your first choice, #2 should be your second choice, #3 your third choice etc. up to number 5. We will make every effort to place you in your top choices. Please choose classes based upon your interest. Please have your parent sign this form.

_____	Cooking & Baking 201	NAME: _____
_____	Design Lab (2 quarters)	ADVISOR: _____
_____	Jam Sesh	GRADE: 8
_____	Robotics	
_____	Yearbook	

- Please Note -

Design Lab is a 2-quarter elective. You must commit to both quarters. Any other electives that are offered both 2nd and 3rd quarter (Jam Sesh, Robotics, Yearbook) may be taken as single-quarter electives, or may be taken for both quarters.

Third Quarter

Please number the electives 1-5. Number 1 should be your first choice, #2 should be your second choice, #3 your third choice etc. up to number 5. We will make every effort to place you in your top choices. Please choose classes based upon your interest. Please have your parent sign this form.

_____	Design Lab (2 quarters)
_____	Jam Sesh
_____	Robotics
_____	Technical Theater
_____	Yearbook

I have reviewed and approve _____'s electives selections.

Parent Signature: _____ Date: _____