

**DOWNINGTOWN AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT**

# **Middle School (7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade) Academic Program 2024-2025**

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Dear Parents and Guardians,

We welcome you to our Middle School as the parent or guardian of an incoming student. The middle school years are an important transition period when adolescents mature socially, emotionally, physically and academically. During these critical years, we urge your active participation and partnership with our staff of teachers, administrators and support personnel to ensure a productive, rewarding, and engaging educational experience for your student.

Downingtown Area School District organizes the middle school student population into smaller academic teams. Teams of teachers representing the core subject areas are assigned to a common group of students. Those teachers share common planning time for the purpose of supporting their students. These smaller learning communities are focused on developmentally appropriate experiences for young adolescents. Educational programming includes learning that is anchored in standards and interdisciplinary instruction, while providing opportunities for exploration and discovery. Middle school programs also pay close attention to the unique physical, social and emotional needs of young adolescents.

As students enrolled in the 7th and 8th grades, the formal structures and supports are diminished so that students become more independent learners. While offering a core academic curriculum in English, Math, Science, Social Studies, Reading and World Language, the middle school addresses the wide spectrum of students' needs through instructional strategies and designs. The encore program offers students a wide array of opportunities to explore Health, Physical Education, Music, Art, Technology Education and Family and Consumer Sciences. A host of additional support services are offered, including gifted and learning support.

Best wishes to you and your student as you experience the middle school years. Adolescents continue to need guidance, nurturing and healthy relationships with adults in order to successfully transition from childhood to adulthood. You play a very important role as the school's partner in supporting them through these transitional years.

Sincerely,

The Administrative Teams at Downingtown and Lionville Middle Schools

## **MIDDLE SCHOOL MISSION STATEMENT**

Together, the students, staff, families, and community of the Downingtown Area School District are committed to developing a middle level program that balances the academic, emotional, social, and physical potential of each student in a safe environment that encourages active life-long learning for a 21<sup>st</sup> century global “Good Neighbor” community.

## ***Middle Level Core Values***

### **We believe that:**

- ❖ Learning is a multifaceted process where the school community embraces the unique qualities of each student by nurturing physical, social, emotional, and intellectual growth.
- ❖ Each student possesses personal value supported and nurtured by an empowering, physically, and emotionally responsive learning environment.
- ❖ Each student will reach his/her potential through actively engaging in purposeful curricula enhanced by technology with a wide variety of interest-focused course offerings.
- ❖ Self-driven student learning will foster social and academic development. Students will accept responsibility, understand consequences, and commit to his/her personal best.
- ❖ Each student will develop into a confident and ethical citizen who learns in a school environment that is inviting, safe, inclusive, and supportive of all.
- ❖ Each student, staff member, and family must openly communicate and interact in order to develop productive, contributing citizens within our school, local, global, and digital communities.
- ❖ Each student must be prepared for the 21<sup>st</sup> century global society in which he/she becomes a critical thinker and life-long learner.

*DASD Middle Level Steering Committee, June, 2007  
Updated, February, 2015*

## ADMINISTRATORS- SCHOOL COUNSELORS- CURRICULUM SUPERVISORS

### Administrators

Downingtown Middle School	
Dr. Nicholas Indeglio	Principal
Ms. Ildiko Brown	Assistant Principal
Mr. Stephen Jenkins	Assistant Principal

Lionville Middle School	
Dr. Jonathan Ross	Principal
Ms. Kristen Del Grippo	Assistant Principal
Mr. Andrew Kirby	Assistant Principal

### School Counselors

Downingtown Middle School	
Ms. Sally Witmer	School Counselor
Ms. Nicole Lipkin	School Counselor
Mr. Todd Shirley	School Counselor

Lionville Middle School	
Ms. Rose Rullo	School Counselor
Ms. Katrina Crane	School Counselor
Mr. Robert Wells	School Counselor

### Curriculum Supervisors

Art, Business, Career Education, Health and Physical Education, Information Resources/Library, and Social Studies	Dr. Troy Podell
English Language Arts, World Languages, and Music	Dr. Kecia Nesmith
Science, Mathematics, and Technology and Engineering Education	Ms. Kelly Byrne
English Language Development	Ms. Elizabeth McKee

## GRADING SYSTEM

Marking period letter grades are ***based upon a variety of in-school student performance measures throughout the marking period.*** Assessments are designed to evaluate students' course content knowledge, skill and concept acquisition as prescribed by PA or national academic standards. Student learning behaviors are reported separately in the learning behaviors portion of the report card.

- A**     Demonstrates superior academic achievement  
          Demonstrates in-depth understanding of course standards  
          Applies knowledge and skills independently  
          Analyzes and evaluates ideas or concepts  
          Meets expectations of skills, concepts, or knowledge at a high level
  
- B**     Demonstrates strong academic achievement  
          Demonstrates solid understanding of course standards  
          Applies knowledge and skills  
          Analyzes and evaluates ideas or concepts in guided situations  
          Meets expectations of skills, concepts, or knowledge
  
- C**     Demonstrates adequate achievement  
          Demonstrates competency of course standards  
          Applies knowledge and skills with guidance  
          Occasionally analyzes and evaluates ideas or concepts in guided situations  
          Meets most expectations of skills, concepts, or knowledge
  
- D**     Demonstrates minimal academic achievement  
          Demonstrates partial understanding of course standards  
          Struggles to apply knowledge and skills with guidance  
          Occasionally identifies ideas or concepts  
          Meets some expectations of skills, concepts, or knowledge
  
- F**     Demonstrates inadequate academic achievement  
          Demonstrates little understanding of course standards  
          Unable to apply knowledge and skills with guidance  
          Rarely identifies ideas or concepts  
          Does not meet expectations of skills, concepts or knowledge

**I** = Incomplete    **M** = Medical    **O** = Outstanding    **S** = Satisfactory    **U** = Unsatisfactory

Learning Behaviors are marked on the report card as follows:

**S** = Strength      **I** = Shows Improvement      **N** = Needs Improvement

1.	Organizes materials
2.	Uses time efficiently
3.	Submits work on time
4.	Demonstrates independence
5.	Prepares for class
6.	Work is legible
7.	Work shows creativity
8.	Demonstrates effort
9.	Demonstrates proper techniques
10.	Cooperates with others
11.	Participates in class
12.	Makes positive contributions to learning environment
13.	Demonstrates appropriate behaviors
14.	Respects others

## SCHOOL COUNSELING PROGRAM

**MESSAGE FOR STUDENTS:** *The school counselors are ready to assist you with any of your concerns by helping you formulate a plan or point you in the correct direction. If you would like to talk to your counselor, just stop in to the Counseling Office to schedule an appointment through the counseling secretary, or email your counselor.*

The primary function of our School Counselors is to assist students in optimizing their learning experiences at the middle school. School counselors are charged to address the academic, social/emotional and career exploration needs. More specifically, the counselors assist students and their parents/guardians with many aspects of education. Some important duties of the middle school counselors include: individual and group counseling, communication between home and school, new student registration, course selection, career education and planning, and transition planning/ programming for the outgoing 8<sup>th</sup> graders.

Students are assigned counselors based on their team. Parents are welcome to contact the counselor to discuss any concerns.

### CAREER EDUCATION:

In middle school, students have the opportunity to continue to explore possible career interests and options. The DASD career curriculum is delivered to every middle school student every year. The district's career curriculum aligns with the Pennsylvania Department of Education Career Education Standards. Every student may access the web-based career exploration system, Smart Futures. Smart Futures enables each student to explore career interests and aptitudes as well as save college and career information to individual profiles. Students' individual accounts are accessible from home and school.

## HONOR ROLL

**Distinguished** = 'A's' in all courses

**High** = 'A's' in at least two core courses and more than half of all courses taken. 'B's' in all remaining courses.

**Regular** = 'A's' in two courses. A maximum of one 'C' and all rest 'B's'.

## SCHEDULING

The Middle School scheduling process begins during the third marking period. Students will be provided with a course selection sheet and will complete the elective course selection online. Core subject teachers in English will make their professional recommendations as to which course a student should take. All students and guardians receive information regarding scheduling from their student's school counselor or building administration. A student's final opportunity to make course request changes is the final day of the previous school year. We do realize that there may be changes which will be IEP/GIEP driven and those changes will be addressed on an individual basis.

## SPECIAL SERVICES AND PROGRAMS

Adapted Physical Education	Career Counseling	Counseling and Guidance
English Language Development	Gifted Education	Hearing Services
Library	Psychological Services	Special Education Services
Speech Services	Student Assistance Services (SAS) and Prevention Specialist	Vision Services

*Additional information can be obtained through the School Counselors.*

## ENGLISH LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT (ELD)

ELD classes are for speakers of other languages who qualify based on a state mandated English language proficiency screening test. During ELD classes, the ELD teacher provides students with structured opportunities to learn and practice all the domains of second language acquisition: listening, speaking, reading and writing. The students also develop content-based academic language as a prerequisite for success in academic programs. To exit from the ELD Program, the state requires: students to demonstrate proficiency on the yearly state WIDA ACCESS Test and establish adequate usage of language observed by content and ELD teachers, as measured by Pennsylvania Department of Education's Language Use Inventory.

## DOWNINGTOWN CYBER ACADEMY

### **Program Overview:**

The Downingtown Cyber Academy (DCA) allows students in grades K-12 to take some or all of their courses online. The online curriculum includes self-paced, robust classes using the latest instructional tools in a virtual classroom. DASD teachers skilled in online instruction help students master the skills they need to succeed—in today's classroom and tomorrow's workplace.

### **Costs:**

There is no cost to attend the Cyber Academy; however, students will be required to provide their own transportation to middle school for any traditional classes they wish to take. Morning and afternoon transportation is available for students whose schedules coincide with regular AM and PM bus routes. Students must participate in the district's 1:1 program or provide their own device in order to participate in DCA.

### **Course Offerings:**

The entire Downingtown Cyber Academy selection of courses can be found online at [www.dasd.org/cyber](http://www.dasd.org/cyber).

The Downingtown Cyber Academy is open to all students registered in the district. Parents can sign up to participate at [www.dasd.org/cyber](http://www.dasd.org/cyber). Students and parents are required to meet with their counselors to discuss online learning before students are enrolled in their courses.



**PROGRAM OF STUDY – 7<sup>TH</sup> GRADE**

<b>Core Subjects</b>	<b>Time Cycle</b>
<b>English Literature</b>	Daily, all year
<b>English Writing</b>	Daily, all year
<b>Science</b>	Daily, all year
<b>U.S. History</b>	Daily, all year
<b>Mathematics</b>	Daily, all year
<b>Reading (if applicable)</b> - <i>takes the place of core subject; English-Literature, U.S. History, Students are placed in Reading courses based on academic need(s). All reading courses meet daily. See information under the READING section in this Course of Studies for the varied classes. If/When a student exits the Reading program, they will resume taking the missing core subject.</i>	Daily, all year
<b><i>Selected Encore Courses- Cycle Based</i></b>	
Family & Consumer Sciences	Art Education- Studio Art 7 Art Education- Digital Art 7 Art Education- 3D Art 7
Technology Education- Science of Technology Technology Education-Engineering and the Environment	Physical Education Health 7
World Language Expeditions- Spanish, French, German	General Music Chorus Vocal Ensemble (audition required) Band Wind Ensemble (8th Grade - audition required) String Orchestra
Special Education Program (IEP required)	Math Extensions (criteria based and/or teacher recommendation)

## PROGRAM OF STUDY – 8<sup>TH</sup> GRADE

Core Subjects	Time Cycle
<b>English</b>	Daily, all year
<b>Science</b>	Daily, all year
<b>U.S. History</b>	Daily, all year
<b>Mathematics</b>	Daily, all year
<b>World Language</b> ( <i>Spanish, French, German</i> )	Daily, all year
<p><b>Reading (if applicable)</b> - <i>takes the place of world language and/or a core subject; English-Literature or U.S History.</i></p> <p><i>Students are placed in Reading courses based on academic need(s). All reading courses meet daily. See information under the READING section in this Course of Studies for the varied classes. If/When a student exits the Reading program, they will resume taking the missing core subject.</i></p>	Daily, all year
<p><i>Students in need of Reading will take a Reading Course every day in lieu of a World Language. If/When a student exits the Reading program, they will begin a world language.</i></p>	
<b><i>Encore Courses</i></b>	
Technology Education- Automation and Robotics Technology Education-Design and Modeling	Physical Education 8 <sup>th</sup> grade Health
Art Education- Studio Art 8 Art Education- Digital Art 8 Art Education- 3D Art 8	General Music Chorus Vocal Ensemble Wind Ensemble Band String Orchestra
Family & Consumer Sciences	Math Extensions (criteria based)
Special Education Program (IEP required)	

## ART

**Studio Art** - The studio art curriculum will allow students to experience a little bit of everything. The focus will be on producing artwork and interpreting that artwork for meaning, while actively engaging in creative problem-solving and self-expression using a variety of concepts and materials. Students will be exposed to the principles of composition, painting, clay, 3-dimensional sculpture and craft, digital design, self-portraiture, landscape, figure drawing, color theory, and much more. Art history is incorporated throughout, encouraging a deeper understanding of the arts and their connections to culture, history, and society. Students are provided the opportunity to use art to explore personal thoughts and opinions and that of the world around them. Classes are offered in both years. In 7th and 8th grade they meet twice in each six-day cycle for the school year (60 days total).

**3D Art** - The 3-dimensional design class provides students with the opportunity to work with their hands. This class takes the concepts of 2-D design and turns them into 3-dimensionally manipulated sculpture and form. Students will have the opportunity to build works of varying sizes using a variety of materials which include, but are not limited to clay, plaster, fabric, wire, wood, recycled and found objects, cardboard, and metal. The pieces created will have decorative and functional purposes.

**Digital Art** - If you're interested in anything related to graphic design, marketing, video game design, or web design this course is the perfect place to start. Learn industry standard programs that the professionals use! Using Adobe Illustrator you will design up to 4ft posters for you to display in your room or use Adobe Photoshop to create vinyl album covers, printable stickers, and retro postcards that you can take home and display!

All art courses will culminate at our annual Art Exhibit in the spring, where students will have the opportunity to share their creative endeavors with the school and the community. All classes are offered in both 7th and 8th grade and meet twice in each six-day cycle for the school year (60 days total).

## ENGLISH

### 7th grade:

The 7th grade English program (Literature and Writing) prepares and challenges students to read, write, listen and speak effectively. Seventh graders enroll in this comprehensive program that emphasizes higher order thinking built upon a foundation of knowledge, skills, and strategies.

A variety of reading strategies help 7th grade students become better readers, listeners, and critical thinkers. Literature study includes both fiction, such as short stories, poetry, drama, and oral traditions as well as nonfiction pieces encompassing essays, autobiographies and technical readings. As students continue to develop as readers, they will identify and interpret differences in formal and informal languages used in speech, writing and literature. In addition to understanding, analyzing, interpreting and evaluating text, students develop critical thinking skills which are constructed through the intentional interaction between the reader and the text. Students are exposed to a full spectrum of reading genres which are intended to support and cultivate life-long reading.

In 7th Grade ELA Writing, students engage in a variety of opportunities for developing writers. The modes of writing (narrative, informational and argumentative) are utilized within the curriculum as students write for a variety of purposes. In this course, students will further develop their knowledge of the five characteristics of effective writing (focus, content, organization, style, and conventions). Students will practice techniques to help them write with a clear focus, controlled organization and ultimately develop content appropriate for their specific topic. Specifically, this method puts emphasis on a better understanding of style by using a variety of sentence structures and descriptive word choices (i.e., adjectives, nouns, verbs). Finally, the use of media and technology is integral in students' self-directed learning, group collaborations and research, as well as a vital tool used by teachers to supplement the curriculum.

Student competency is demonstrated in the PSSA ELA Assessment, district benchmark assessments, and teacher-created formative and summative evaluations that are student driven. The course prepares students to construct meaning in all curricular areas and, ultimately, to fully participate as lifelong learners and informed, productive members of society.

## **8<sup>th</sup> Grade:**

The 8<sup>th</sup> grade English program prepares and challenges students to read, write, listen and speak effectively. It is an integrated, comprehensive program that emphasizes higher order thinking built upon a foundation of knowledge, skills, and strategies.

Student competency is demonstrated in the PSSA Reading Assessments, district benchmark assessments, and teacher-created formative and summative evaluations that are student driven. The goal of the program is to develop and challenge students to read, write, listen and speak effectively. The English program prepares students to construct meaning in all curricular areas and, ultimately, to participate fully as lifelong learners and informed, productive members of society.

This program employs a wide variety of reading strategies to comprehend, interpret, analyze and evaluate various kinds of texts, allowing students to respond critically in order to demonstrate understanding of important features as well as the historical and cultural context. Students develop critical thinking skills which are constructed through the intentional interaction between the reader and the text. Students are exposed to a full spectrum of reading genres which are intended to support and cultivate life-long reading.

The modes of writing (narrative, informational, and persuasive) are utilized within the curriculum as students write for a variety of purposes. In this course, students will grow in their knowledge of the five characteristics of effective writing (focus, content, organization, style, and conventions). Students will learn techniques to help them write with a clear focus, controlled organization, and ultimately develop content appropriate for their specific topic. Specifically, this method puts emphasis on a better understanding of style by using a variety of sentence structures and descriptive word choices (i.e., adjectives, nouns, verbs). It also implements features that allow students to convey the tone and voice of their writing through conventions of language that are grade appropriate. As eighth graders develop their writing skills, they will identify and interpret differences in formal and informal language skills used in speech, writing and literature. Finally, the use of media and technology will be integral in students' self-directed learning, group collaborations and research, as well as a vital tool used by teachers to instruct the curriculum.

## **FAMILY AND CONSUMER SCIENCES (FCS)**

The 7th grade FCS course includes a general introduction to preparing food in the kitchen, kitchen equipment, MyPlate, and superfoods. Kitchen experience is gained through classroom lab work and reinforced through a project completed at home. Laundry care, child development, and an introduction to sewing is also included. Students will leave sewing with not only a hand-made project, but also the skills gained from exercising patience and persistence while learning a process which is new to many students.

The 8th grade FCS course includes units on kitchen safety, the basics of how to follow a recipe, food science, and nutrition. Students will collaborate during food labs and projects (both personal and community service-related), and an emphasis is placed on executing recipes accurately, teamwork, and time management. Other units include sewing basics, measuring & cutting fabric, following pattern directions, and hand sewing skills. An introduction to budgeting and finance is also covered, with an exploration into credit cards, debit cards, earning money from your first job, and consumerism in the 21st Century.

## **GIFTED EDUCATION**

Gifted education services are provided through specially designed instruction individually tailored to accelerate and/or to enrich a student's regular education courses. A Gifted Individualized Educational Plan (GIEP) is developed for students for whom gifted services are appropriate. Students should address questions about gifted education services with their gifted education teacher.

## **HEALTH**

All students must take health in 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades. The General Health curriculum is offered in 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades. It is important during these formative years that students acquire a knowledge base to make healthy lifestyle decisions. Students will view health as a state of physical, mental, intellectual and social well-being. The course content is designed to meet the following state standards: concepts of health, healthful living and safety and injury prevention. Topics included in the middle school health program are: life skills, systems of the body, human growth and development, chemical substances, alcohol and tobacco, dental hygiene, mental health, diseases, eating disorders, anger management, and self-esteem. It is the intent that the student will acquire or further develop worthwhile habits, knowledge, skills and attitudes that will last a lifetime. Parents have the right to opt their child out of the Human Growth and Development unit

by completing and returning the letter sent to each family. Students who opt out will be assigned an alternate health unit of study.

Integrated into the 7<sup>th</sup> grade Health series is First Aid CPR/AED content. This instructional content provides students with an opportunity to gain life skills that can be applied in everyday life situations. Successful mastery of the instructional material certifies the students in American Red Cross First Aid/CPR/AED.

More specifically, the students will be provided with an introduction to anatomy and physiology, prevention and care for intentional and unintentional injuries, and treatment/care/and prevention of common athletic injuries. Additional content will include Alcohol/Drug Use and Misuse, Signs and Symptoms, and Activating EMS. After taking this class, the students will have the skills necessary to act if an emergency situation presents itself.

## MATHEMATICS

The middle level mathematics program consists of a variety of course offerings. Students are placed in courses based on their mathematical skills, readiness, performance on standardized assessments, growth measures, performance on prior course assessments, and successful completion of prerequisite courses.

### *7<sup>th</sup> Grade Mathematics:*

Students in 7<sup>th</sup> grade will be placed in Grade 7 Math, Grade 7-8 Math, or Algebra I (see chart below). At the end of 7<sup>th</sup> grade, multiple mathematics criteria will be considered for the next year's placement. Specifics will be communicated to families in the Spring.

**Grade 7 Math** Emphasis on problem solving in the categories of rational numbers, expressions & equations, geometry, ratios & proportional relationships, and probability & statistics. A focus on the Standards of Mathematical Practices encourages students to use the skills of perseverance, abstract & quantitative reasoning, communication, modeling, strategic use of tools, attending to precision, and making use of structure to deepen their understanding of mathematical concepts.

**Grade 7-8 Math** In this course there will be an emphasis on expressions and equations, including problem solving with radicals and integer exponents, analyzing linear relationships between variables using slope, and writing, solving, graphing linear equations. Students will work with rational and irrational numbers, explore functions, apply properties of geometry, and investigate and understand bivariate data. A focus on the Standards of Mathematical Practices encourages students to use the skills of perseverance, abstract & quantitative reasoning, communication, modeling, strategic use of tools, attending to precision, and making use of structure to deepen their understanding of mathematical concepts.

**Algebra I** Topics include real numbers, properties, simplifying terms and expressions using the order of operations, solving equations, inequalities, systems of equations, factoring polynomials, simplifying radical expressions, and graphing linear equations and inequalities. This course follows Grade 7-8 Math. Students may not take Algebra I through alternate means, i.e., summer school, online course through district approved providers, teacher-directed independent study, etc. due to it being a Keystone tested course.

### *8<sup>th</sup> Grade Mathematics:*

**Grade 8 Math** This course introduces students to important concepts that are essential for success at the next level. In this course there will be an emphasis on expressions and equations, including problem solving with radicals and integer exponents, analyzing linear relationships between variables using slope, and writing, solving, graphing linear equations. Students will work with rational and irrational numbers, explore functions, apply properties of geometry, and investigate and understand bivariate data. A focus on the Standards of Mathematical Practices encourages students to use the skills of perseverance, abstract & quantitative reasoning, communication, modeling, strategic use of tools, attending to precision, and making use of structure to deepen their understanding of mathematical concepts.

**Algebra I** Topics include real numbers, properties, simplifying terms and expressions using the order of operations, solving equations, inequalities, systems of equations, factoring polynomials, simplifying radical expressions, and graphing linear equations and inequalities. This course follows Grade 7-8 Math. Students may not take Algebra I through alternate means, i.e., summer school, online course through district approved providers, teacher-directed independent study, etc. due to it being a Keystone tested course.

**Algebra II** is available to 8<sup>th</sup> grade students who have successfully completed Algebra I in 7<sup>th</sup> grade. Emphasis is placed on systems of equalities and inequalities, quadratic relations, polynomials, functions, probability and statistics, logarithms and conic sections. (Prerequisite: Algebra I)

**Math Extensions** is a course offered to 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students by recommendation only and is considered to be a general education math intervention. Students are enrolled in this course, in addition to their regular mathematics classes, two or four times per six-day cycle. The purpose of this class is to assist students in overcoming academic gaps in mathematics, in addition to providing students with pre-teaching and review opportunities in conjunction with the mathematics instruction offered in Grade 7 Math and Grade 8 Math.

### DASD Middle School to High School Mathematics Progression

	Progression 4	Progression 3	Progression 2	Progression 1
Grade 6	Algebra I	Grade 6-7 Math	Grade 6-7 Math	Grade 6 Math
Grade 7	Geometry	Algebra I (if mastery in Grade 7-8 Math is demonstrated)	Grade 7-8 Math	Grade 7 Math
Grade 8	Algebra II	Algebra II	Algebra I	Grade 8 Math
Grade 9	Pre-Calculus	Geometry	Algebra II	Algebra I
Grade 10	AP Calculus AB	Pre-Calculus	Geometry	Algebra II
Grade 11	AP Calculus BC	AP Calculus AB	Pre-Calculus	Geometry
Grade 12	AP Statistics	AP Calculus BC AP Statistics	Calculus AP Calculus AB AP Statistics Probability and Statistics	Pre-Calculus Probability and Statistics AP Statistics

## MUSIC

A variety of offerings are provided for the wide range of student interests and talents. Students may choose from one of the following music courses:

**General Music** is offered in 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades. This class meets twice per cycle. General Music focuses on giving students experiences in music through the use of technology: listening, creating original compositions and performing on instruments (piano, ukulele, world percussion). Elements of music included in the course are: theory, styles, technology, cultures, history, instruments and current trends in music. There are no prerequisites or participation fees for this class.

**Band** is offered in 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades. Students participating in band meet twice per cycle in a large group rehearsal setting where they learn the fundamentals of music through performance of a variety of musical styles as well the relationship to music theory and history. Band students are also scheduled for a small group lesson once per cycle on a rotating schedule. These lessons provide students with the necessary opportunities to learn the proper technique of playing their unique instruments and allow for individual student assessment. Students at all levels of ability are challenged to meet their own personal musical potential through home practice, lesson attendance, rehearsals and performances. All band members are required to attend two evening concerts and any after school rehearsals scheduled by the director. Wind Ensemble is an advanced level band available to 8<sup>th</sup> graders who meet musical performance criteria. Jazz Band is an after-school group available to 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students who play jazz instruments and provides a smaller group experience in that genre. There are no beginning level band classes and all students entering band at the middle level must have participated in a band program for at least one year. *Participation in this class may require payment of the DASD activity fee.*

**Chorus** is offered to students in 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades. Students at all levels of ability are challenged to meet their own personal musical potential through classroom rehearsal and home practice. All chorus members are required to attend two evening concerts and any after school rehearsals scheduled by the director. Students are instructed in correct vocal technique, music theory and musicianship skills. Written work will include but not be limited to concert reviews, practice logs, music theory, tests and quizzes. Grading is based on class participation, written work, vocal technique, rehearsals and concerts. Participation in this may require payment of the DASD activity fee.

**Vocal Ensemble** is an advanced level choir available to 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders who audition in the spring for placement for the following school year. Vocal ensemble members are required to attend two evening concerts, and four after school rehearsals as scheduled by the director. Vocal ensemble students will learn the chorus songs as well as more advanced repertoire in their Vocal Ensemble classes. They are encouraged but not required to also sign up for a Chorus class where they will function as section leaders. Students are instructed in correct vocal technique, music theory and musicianship skills. Written work will include but is not be limited to concert reviews, practice logs, music theory, tests and quizzes. Grading is based on class participation, written work, vocal technique, rehearsals and concerts. Participation in this may require payment of the DASD activity fee.

**String Orchestra** is offered to students in 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades. Students participating in orchestra meet twice per cycle in a large group rehearsal setting where they learn the fundamentals of performance. Students will develop through exposure to and the performance of a variety of musical styles as well as its relationship to music theory and history. Orchestra students are also scheduled for a small group lesson once per cycle on a rotating basis. Small group lessons provide students with the necessary opportunities to learn proper technique and allow for individual student assessment. Students at all levels of ability are challenged to meet their own personal musical potential through home practice, lesson attendance, rehearsals and performances. Students in orchestra are required to attend two evening concerts and any after school rehearsals scheduled by the director. There are no beginning level orchestra classes and all students entering orchestra at the middle level must have participated in an orchestra program for at least one year.

*Participation in this class may require payment of the DASD activity fee.*

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

All students are required to take physical education in both 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade. The Physical Education program is designed to meet the physical, mental, emotional and social needs of the middle school student through vigorous physical exercise, life skills including cooperative learning, team building, problem-solving and positive peer interaction. Flexibility, strength, coordination, and cardio-vascular endurance are the ultimate goals of the total fitness-based program.

The program for 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade includes team sports, large group games, fitness activities, and adventure-based activities such as group challenges, a low ropes course and a bouldering wall. Each grade level may include different games or focus on advanced skills of the same sport offered at a lower grade level. Activities are designed to meet state standards: safety and injury prevention, physical activities that promote fitness, effects of regular participation in physical activity, response of the body systems to physical activity, physical activity preferences, motor skill improvement, physical activity and group interaction, and concepts, principles, and strategies of movement. It is our intent that students acquire or further develop healthy habits, knowledge, skills, and attitudes that will last a lifetime.

## READING

The Middle School Reading Program promotes effective, proficient and independent readers. The following courses are offered to provide instruction that best fits the individual needs of the middle school student.

**Reading Foundations** is a strategy-based instructional program for students who struggle with reading. Ongoing assessment and monitoring of student progress enable teachers to provide appropriate instruction. Purposeful pacing, explicit instruction, ample guided practice, and targeted review characterize the instructional focus of this program. Materials and instructional methods that consider the interest of the student as well as the level of difficulty of reading selections foster the desired learning. This course is offered daily for the entire school year to recommended 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students. Students who meet the prescribed set of reading proficiency criteria may exit the course before the end of the school year.

**Reading Comprehension** is a strategy-based program for struggling readers that focuses primarily on improving a student's ability to understand text. Explicit instruction and teacher modeling of essential comprehension strategies provide the instructional foundation of this course. Students apply these skills via guided and independent practice in a variety of reading situations. This course is offered daily for the entire school year to recommended 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students. Students who meet the prescribed set of reading criteria may exit the course before the end of the school year.

## SCIENCE

### 7th Grade Science:

7th Grade Science is set up in 6 units of study. The first three units dwell on concepts and phenomena of chemistry. The last three units focus on concepts and phenomena of Ecology. All the units guide students in the process of science investigation, experimentation, discovery, and informational communication. The units have open ended text that allows students to record information as they become aware of new ideas. All units have open ended assessments. Students are all able to use course notebooks and course materials and resources to assist with all assignments and assessments.

The units of study are Chemical Reactions and Matter, Chemical Reactions and Energy, Metabolic Reactions. Matter Cycling and Photosynthesis, Ecosystem Dynamics and Biodiversity, and Earth Resources and Human Impact..

### 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Science:

8th Grade Science is set up in 6 units of study presented in a storyline format (a logical sequence of lessons that are motivated by students' questions) that integrates science and engineering practices and involves cross-curricular concepts. Interesting phenomena are the key to the storyline approach. Ultimately, every storyline is a journey to figuring out a phenomenon that defies easy explanation. Each unit has open ended text and opportunities that engage students in critical thinking and problem-solving.

Units of study include Contact Forces, Sound Waves, Forces at a Distance (magnetism), Earth in Space, Genetics, and Natural Selections & Common Ancestry.

Students will engage in content through questioning, investigating, and building understanding that is anchored in the students' own experiences and questions.

## SOCIAL STUDIES

The Social Studies curriculum is designed to provide the student with knowledge and appreciation of their own culture and history as well as that of their closest neighbors in North, Central and South America. Certain strands are interwoven within each grade level course: current events, cultural diversity, geographical influences, history, economics, and political science all become parts of the course content. The inclusion of these strands provides a much broader view of the particular topics being studied.

### 7<sup>th</sup> Grade: History of the United States, American Revolution to the Civil War:

Units of study include creating a new nation, the Articles of Confederation, the Constitution, the New Republic, and United States expansion across the North American continent. Common Summative Assessments include written tests, quizzes, projects and journals.

### 8<sup>th</sup> Grade: History of the United States (1850-1918):

Units of study include the Civil War, Reconstruction, Progressivism, United States Imperialism and World War I. Common Summative Assessment of learning encompasses a variety of formats and may include: projects, written tests, quizzes and student presentations. Writing is incorporated into the 8<sup>th</sup> grade Social Studies curriculum through multiple means including essays, personal responses and journals.

## SPECIAL EDUCATION

The Middle School Special Education program addresses the needs of students with varying educational disabilities. The program ranges from supplemental to itinerant levels of support. Students all have an Individualized Education Program/Plan (IEP) and services are delivered through a variety of programs.

Supported instruction is a team approach where a regular education teacher and a special education teacher collaborate to meet the varying educational needs of the special education students in a regular education setting.

Special Education students are also given the opportunity to participate in a Curriculum Support class, known as Executive Functioning. This scheduled class addresses the needs of organization and time management in addition to supporting various curricular areas. Curriculum Support classes are scheduled for two, four, or six days per cycle, based upon the individual student's needs.

There is a Life Skills, Autistic, and Emotional Support program offered at each middle school.



## TECHNOLOGY AND ENGINEERING EDUCATION

Technology and Engineering Education courses introduce students to the engineering design process and core concepts like energy, electricity, robotics, and manufacturing. Students acquire design thinking and engineering skills through introductory open-ended projects and design challenges allow students to apply engineering practices to real-world problems. Hands-on, inquiry-based learning is emphasized to engage students in prototyping, modeling, testing, and refining solutions. Students also explore career paths in various fields of engineering and technology. These courses aim to build a foundation of design, engineering, and problem-solving skills.

**Technology and Engineering Foundations** prepares students to understand and apply technological concepts and engineering processes, the cornerstones of our technology and engineering programs. Through both individual and collaborative activities, students will actively create ideas, develop innovations, and devise practical solutions. The technology and engineering content, resources, and hands-on lab/classroom activities will enable students to apply their knowledge of science, mathematics, and other subjects to real-world situations. Students will use industry-standard tools and software to solve problems and design projects while developing critical thinking, communication, and teamwork abilities. By the end of the course, students will have built a strong foundation in core engineering and technology skills. This course is a mandatory course while in middle school.

**Design and Modeling** - In this course students begin to recognize the value of an engineering notebook to document and capture their ideas. They are introduced to and use the design process to solve problems and understand the influence that creative and innovative design has on our lives. Students use industry standard 3D modeling software to create a virtual image of their designs and produce a portfolio to showcase their creative solutions.

Prerequisite: Technology and Engineering Foundations

**Automation and Robotics** – In this course, students trace the history, development, and influence of automation and robotics. They learn about mechanical systems, energy transfer, machine automation and computer control systems. Students use a robust robotics platform to design, build, and program a solution to solve an existing problem.

Prerequisite: Technology and Engineering Foundations

**Engineering: Future Cities Team** is offered to 8<sup>th</sup> grade students who have an interest in engineering and/or STEM based fields. Students will utilize a team-based approach to research, design, construct, and problem solve to create a city of the future while simultaneously writing a comprehensive 1000-word essay that summarizes the major engineering components of the city, a 500-word narrative of the top 10 innovative ideas to be utilized in the city and lastly building a physical city from recycled material. The culmination of the course is participation in the annual National Engineers Week Future Cities team competition held during the month of January. Students will be selected based upon the completion of an application which will be evaluated by members of the technology education department and school administration.

One section of the course will be offered and students will meet every day for the entire academic year. The first two marking periods of the academic year (90 days) will be dedicated to Future Cities. The last two marking periods will be dedicated to courses currently offered at the middle level.

## WORLD LANGUAGES

### **Middle School World Language Options:**

#### **French, German, or Spanish for 7th and 8th Grades**

The primary goal of our World Language Curriculum at the middle school level is: to cultivate proficiency in listening, speaking, reading, and writing within the chosen language. Additionally, the curriculum aims to offer a gateway to a deeper comprehension and appreciation of the language through the exploration of the vibrant cultures linked to it.

- Foster immersive and engaging experiences that utilize the new language and enrich cultural understanding.
- Cultivate effective communication skills for real-world scenarios.
- Encourage positive and inclusive attitudes towards individuals from diverse cultures.
- Inspire students with the motivation to pursue ongoing language learning journeys.

#### **French, German, and Spanish Expeditions (2x/cycle):**

- Explore relevant day-to-day topics such as studies, social interactions, personal preferences, sports, and hobbies.
- Gain insight into the culture and traditions of the target language community and their impact on daily life.
- Comprehend short, context-rich texts effectively.
- Utilize present tense forms of both regular and irregular verbs.
- Participate in basic interpersonal exchanges, including greetings, introductions, and polite interactions.
- Initiate short, personalized written compositions using correct grammatical structures.
- Engage in both formal and informal spoken interactions with peers and instructors.

#### **Level 1 of a World Language:**

Level I language courses are introductory programs designed to cultivate fundamental communication skills in the target language, encompassing reading, writing, listening, and speaking. The curriculum places a strong emphasis on mastering elementary grammar structures and acquiring essential vocabulary, laying a solid foundation for effective communication. Throughout the course, students embark on a journey to explore and appreciate the rich cultures and customs of the countries where the language is spoken, fostering both linguistic and cultural awareness.