

# DOWNINGTOWN AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT

## Middle School (7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade) Academic Program 2026-2027

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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 Grippio | 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. Alicia Osunde       | School Counselor |
| Ms. Katrina Crane       | School Counselor |
| Mr. Robert Wells        | School Counselor |

### Curriculum Supervisors

|                                                                          |                     |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|
| Career Education, Social Studies, World Languages                        | Dr. Troy Podell     |
| Science, Technology and Engineering, Family and Consumer Sciences, Music | Ms. Kelly Byrne     |
| English Language Development                                             | Ms. Elizabeth McKee |
| English Language Arts and Library                                        | Dr. Kristie Burk    |
| Mathematics, Art, Business, Health and Physical Education, Reading       | Ms. Katie Dugan     |

## 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. English Language Arts teachers 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 12th day of the school year (end of encore cycle two).** 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. Students in the DCA will attend classes through our partnership with the Chester County Intermediate Unit's Brandywine Virtual Academy. Students will have asynchronous and synchronous options. It should be noted that once enrolled at BVA, the student is committed to completing that semester.

### **Costs:**

There is no cost to attend the Cyber Academy;. Students must participate in the district's 1:1 program—in order to participate in DCA.

### **Course Offerings:**

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

The Downingtown Cyber Academy is open to all students registered in the district. Parents can sign up to participate at [dc.dasd.org](http://dc.dasd.org). 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                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                            |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Core Subjects                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Time Cycle                                                                                                                                 |
| English Language Arts                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Twice daily, all year                                                                                                                      |
| Science                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Daily, all year                                                                                                                            |
| U.S. History                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Daily, all year                                                                                                                            |
| Mathematics                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Daily, all year                                                                                                                            |
| Reading (if applicable) - takes the place of core subject English-Literature, U.S. History, Science. 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. | Daily, all year                                                                                                                            |
| Selected Encore Courses- Cycle Based                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                            |
| Family & Consumer Sciences                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Art Education- Studio Art 7<br>Art Education- Digital Art 7<br>Art Education- 3D Art 7                                                     |
| Technology Education- Technology and Engineering Foundations                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Physical Education<br>Health 7                                                                                                             |
| World Language Expeditions- Spanish, French, German                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | General Music<br>Chorus<br>Vocal Ensemble (audition required)<br>Band<br>Wind Ensemble (8th Grade - audition required)<br>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                                                                             |
| English Language Arts                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Daily, all year                                                                        |
| Science                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Daily, all year                                                                        |
| U.S. History                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Daily, all year                                                                        |
| Mathematics                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Daily, all year                                                                        |
| World Language ( <i>Spanish, French, German</i> )                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Daily, all year                                                                        |
| <p><b>Reading (if applicable)</b> - takes the place of World Language and/or a core subject; U.S History.</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>                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                        |
| Encore Courses                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                        |
| Technology Education- Automation and Robotics<br>Technology Education-Design and Modeling                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Physical Education<br>8 <sup>th</sup> grade Health                                     |
| Art Education- Studio Art 8<br>Art Education- Digital Art 8<br>Art Education- 3D Art 8                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | General Music<br>Chorus<br>Vocal Ensemble<br>Wind Ensemble<br>Band<br>String Orchestra |
| Family & Consumer Sciences                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Math Extensions (criteria based)                                                       |
| Special Education Program (IEP required)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                        |

## ART

**Studio Art 7 & 8** - 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 at both levels will be exposed to the principles of composition, painting, clay, 3-dimensional sculpture and craft, 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 those of the world around them. Studio art is offered in 7th and 8th grade. You may take it once or both years. Classes meet twice in each six-day cycle for the school year (60 days total).

**3D Art 7 & 8** - 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 transforms 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 may include, but are not limited to clay, plaster, wax, fabric, wire, wood, recycled and found objects, cardboard, and metal. The pieces created will have decorative and functional purposes. 3D Art is offered in 7th and 8th grade. You may take it once or both years. Classes meet twice in each six-day cycle for the school year (60 days total).

**Digital Art 7 & 8** - Digital Art focuses on graphic design, marketing, and web design. Learn industry-standard programs that professionals use like Adobe Illustrator or Adobe Photoshop. Digital Art is offered in 7th and 8th grade. You may take it once or both years. Classes meet twice in each six-day cycle for the school year (60 days total).

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.

## ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

### 7th Grade:

The seventh-grade English Language Arts (ELA) course is designed to develop students' proficiency in reading comprehension and analysis through engagement with complex and varied texts. Students will closely read texts from a broad range of genres, including poetry, memoirs, informational articles, and historical documents. Students develop skills to analyze text structure and literary elements, such as point of view, character motivation, and theme, often exploring multiple layers of meaning that may be subtle or inferred. Furthermore, students work on synthesizing central ideas developed across multiple texts, requiring them to make high-level inferences and interpret nuanced text details. The course also focuses on substantially expanding students' vocabulary and knowledge base across various subject areas, from classic literature to neuroscience.

A significant component of the course is the development of evidence-based written and oral communication skills. Students practice argumentative, informative, and narrative writing, learning to structure their ideas, use logical reasoning to support claims, and employ domain-specific vocabulary. They develop revision skills to strengthen elaboration and improve their authorial choices, such as using stronger verbs or figurative language. In terms of speaking and listening, students participate in activities such as Socratic seminars, debates, and presentations, which require them to articulate their perspectives, engage in student-led discussions, and integrate information from multiple sources. These activities foster critical thinking by pushing students to move beyond surface-level understanding and grapple with interesting, complex ideas.

The seventh-grade ELA course also prepares students for future academic success by building essential research and media literacy skills. Students will learn to distinguish between primary, secondary, and tertiary sources, evaluate a source's reliability, and construct their own focused research questions. Units incorporate media analysis, such as comparing film adaptations of texts, storyboarding, or creating multimedia presentations. Students also practice using technology to enhance their learning and communication skills. Ultimately, the course empowers students to become independent, critical thinkers who can confidently tackle complex texts and communicate their insights effectively.

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

The eighth-grade English Language Arts (ELA) course advances students' skills in reading comprehension and rigorous analysis by exposing them to increasingly complex literary and informational texts. Students will move beyond identifying themes to analyzing how multiple themes interact and build upon each other across a whole text. A key

focus is analyzing rhetorical strategies and the impact of authorial choices, such as irony, satire, and figurative language, on a work's meaning and tone. They will practice evaluating the soundness of reasoning and the relevance of evidence in arguments presented in historical, scientific, and literary sources. Furthermore, the course substantially enhances students' academic vocabulary and their ability to grapple with challenging historical and cultural contexts embedded in texts.

A significant goal of the course is to develop sophisticated evidence-based written and oral communication skills. Students will focus on mastering argumentative writing by crafting precise, knowledgeable claims, organizing counterclaims logically, and supporting their positions with highly relevant, well-integrated evidence from multiple sources. In informative writing, they learn to explain abstract ideas or processes in depth and to choose a structure that best suits their purpose and audience. Speaking and listening skills are refined through formal presentations and collaborative discussions, where students must evaluate the claims and reasoning of others and respectfully build on ideas. These activities are designed to foster critical thinking by requiring students to synthesize complex information and present a well-reasoned, compelling case.

The course prepares students for high school by deeply integrating research and advanced media literacy skills. Students will conduct focused research projects, learning to distinguish between reliable, peer-reviewed sources and biased or unverified online information. They practice synthesizing information from diverse media formats—including videos, podcasts, and data visualizations—with written texts to gain a comprehensive understanding of a topic. Students also engage in creative digital projects, which helps them understand the difference between print, digital, and visual platforms. Ultimately, the eighth-grade course culminates in students becoming more proficient communicators and media-savvy individuals.

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

### **7th Grade**

This course is a basic introduction to foods/nutrition, sewing, and childcare where students will gain hands-on experiences. Students will work in the kitchen covering basic food preparation, kitchen safety, equipment use, and fundamental nutrition principles through classroom cooking labs. Beyond the kitchen, students will learn about laundry care and explore child development. The course also includes an introduction to sewing, which allows students to leave 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.

### **8th Grade**

This course focuses on developing life skills through practical and collaborative units. Students will build competence in the kitchen by learning kitchen safety, food science, and nutrition, with an emphasis on accurately following recipes, teamwork, and time management during food labs and collaborative projects (both personal and community-focused). Beyond the kitchen, students will gain skills in sewing, including sewing basics, measuring and cutting fabric, following pattern directions, and hand-sewing techniques. A key component of this course is a practical introduction to budgeting and personal finance. This unit explores essential topics such as: earning money from a first job and career readiness, the function of credit cards and debit cards and understanding 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 the general health curriculum offered in 7th and 8th 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, safety and injury prevention. Topics included in the middle school health program are: life skills, systems of the body, human growth and development, drugs, alcohol and tobacco, mental health, diseases, and nutrition. 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:** The 7th-grade math program aims to build a comprehensive understanding of key mathematical concepts through exploration, problem-solving, and application. The curriculum focuses on helping students make connections between mathematical ideas and real-life contexts, fostering a strong foundation for Algebra 1 and higher-level math in high school. The units of study include: **Proportional Relationships, Numbers and Operations: Operations with Rational Numbers, Expressions, Equations, and Inequalities, Proportional Reasoning, Geometry, and Probability.**

**Grade 7-8 Math:** The Grade 7-8 Math program is designed for students ready for both half of 7th grade and all of 8th grade content. The curriculum offers a faster-paced, in-depth exploration of foundational math concepts, emphasizing critical thinking, problem-solving, and real-world applications. The course prepares students for Algebra 1 and beyond, with a strong focus on algebraic thinking, data analysis, and geometric concepts. The units of study include: **Proportional Reasoning, Geometry, Probability, Geometric figures: Transformations, Congruence, Similarity and Angle Relationships, Linear Relationships: Slope, Linear Equations, and Systems, Functions: Linear and Non-Linear Relationships, Integer Exponents, Rational Numbers, Irrational Numbers, the Pythagorean Theorem, and Statistics.**

**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:** The 8th-grade math program aims to build a comprehensive understanding of key mathematical concepts through exploration, problem-solving, and application. The curriculum focuses on helping students make connections between mathematical ideas and real-life contexts, fostering a strong foundation for Algebra 1 and higher-level math in high school. The units of study include: **Geometric figures: Transformations, Congruence, Similarity and Angle Relationships, Linear Relationships: Slope, Linear Equations, and Systems, Functions: Linear and Non-Linear Relationships, Integer Exponents, Rational Numbers, Irrational Numbers, the Pythagorean Theorem, and Statistics.**

**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, four, or six 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  | Algebra II     | Algebra I (if mastery in Grade 7-8 Math is demonstrated) | Grade 7-8 Math                                                            | Grade 7 Math                                                |
| Grade 8  | Geometry       | Algebra II                                               | Algebra I                                                                 | Grade 8 Math                                                |
| Grade 9  | Pre-Calculus   | Geometry                                                 | Geometry                                                                  | Algebra I                                                   |
| Grade 10 | AP Calculus AB | Pre-Calculus                                             | Algebra II                                                                | Geometry                                                    |
| Grade 11 | AP Calculus BC | AP Calculus AB                                           | Pre-Calculus                                                              | Algebra II                                                  |
| Grade 12 | AP Statistics  | AP Calculus BC<br>AP Statistics                          | Calculus<br>AP Calculus AB<br>AP Statistics<br>Probability and Statistics | Pre-Calculus<br>Probability and Statistics<br>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

The 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade 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.

**Linguistics** is an academically rigorous course that builds a deep understanding of the structure and function of the English language through systematic study and application. Students explore the relationships between sounds, spelling patterns, and word structure while strengthening decoding, encoding, and fluency skills. Instruction emphasizes phonemic awareness, morphology, and the principles of English orthography to enhance accuracy, comprehension, and written expression. The Reading and Counseling Departments schedule students in this course.

**Language Structure** is a structured literacy course grounded in the Orton-Gillingham approach, providing systematic, multisensory instruction in reading and spelling. Students engage in explicit lessons that build mastery of sound-symbol relationships, word patterns, and decoding and encoding skills. Consistent routines and tactile strategies, including Touch-Spelling to reinforce linguistic understanding and promote confident, accurate reading and writing. The Reading and Counseling Departments schedule students in this course.

**Orthography** is a structured literacy course that explores the patterns and principles of English spelling and word formation. Students study phonemic awareness, syllable types, and common Latin roots to strengthen decoding, encoding, and vocabulary skills. Emphasis is placed on applying linguistic knowledge to enhance reading fluency, spelling accuracy, and overall academic literacy. The Reading and Counseling Departments schedule students in this course.

**Language & Literacy** is a literacy course designed to strengthen students' comprehension, vocabulary, and critical reading strategies across a variety of texts. The course integrates adaptive instructional technology, ongoing assessment, and high-interest fiction and nonfiction materials to support growth in reading proficiency and confidence. Instruction emphasizes purposeful pacing, explicit strategy instruction, guided practice, and opportunities for independent application. Learning experiences are tailored to align with each student's strengths, interests, and goals as a reader. The Reading and Counseling Departments schedule students in this course.

**Applied Literacy Skills** is an academic literacy course designed to strengthen students' comprehension, vocabulary, and critical reading strategies across a variety of informational and literary texts. Instruction emphasizes explicit modeling, guided practice, and independent application of strategies that promote deeper understanding of complex material. Students engage with high-interest and content-rich texts that support success in all academic areas. Differentiated instruction and adaptive learning tools allow teachers to tailor instruction to individual student strengths and goals. The Reading and Counseling Departments schedule students in this course.

## SCIENCE

### 7th Grade Science:

The 7th Grade curriculum is structured into six comprehensive units. The first three units focus on the concepts and phenomena of chemistry, while the last three delve into biology/ecology. Each unit is designed to guide students through scientific investigation, experimentation, and discovery, as well as effective informational communication.

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

All units feature open-ended text, allowing students to record their observations and insights as they encounter new ideas. Additionally, assessments are authentic to the phenomena being assessed, enabling students to utilize their course notebooks and available resources to support their assignments and evaluations.

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

8th Grade Science is composed of 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. Anchoring phenomena are the foundation 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.