DOWNINGTOWN AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT

MARSH CREEK SIXTH GRADE CENTER

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DOWNINGTOWN, PA 19335
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WWW.DASD.ORG

PROGRAM OF STUDY
2026-2027
ACADEMIC YEAR



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OUR SCHOOL...

Provides a Warm and Welcoming Atmosphere

Our school's physical design incorporates natural sunlight and green spaces, creating an inviting environment that reflects the merging of multiple schools into one cohesive community. Marsh Creek, in particular, offers a developmentally appropriate, whole-school program that supports intellectual growth, builds confidence, and fosters teamwork as students begin their adolescent journey.

The interdisciplinary team approach transforms a large school into a more comfortable and personal learning environment. Our schedule meets the developmental needs of students, helping them navigate through a challenging curriculum and time of life. Students participate in team-based field trips and activities that extend their learning beyond the classroom walls and provide opportunities for additional connections with their peers.

Finally, recognizing that the school experience does not stop at the end of the academic day, Marsh Creek offers multiple exciting after-school activities tailored to the interests of sixth graders. This robust program provides opportunities to form positive relationships with friends and teachers based on similar interests during intramurals, clubs, and community service opportunities.

An Engaging Learning Environment

Creating an engaging learning environment for sixth graders involves fostering curiosity, collaboration, and hands-on activities. Students benefit from a blend of structured learning and interactive experiences that encourage them to explore, ask questions, and express their ideas. Using diverse teaching methods—like group projects, creative technology, and real-world problem-solving—students stay motivated and feel connected to the material. Positive classroom culture promotes respect and support among peers which is essential in helping sixth graders build confidence, work as a team, and develop a lifelong love of learning.

An Individually Responsive Place to Grow

Transitioning from elementary school to the larger environment at Marsh Creek can be challenging for students. Marsh Creek partners closely with each elementary school during this transition, and our principals and school counselors collaborate with parents to ensure that students are appropriately challenged and supported in their learning journey.

Dr. Matt Barr
Principal

LEADERSHIP TEAM

Administration & Student Support Team

Dr. Matthew Barr Principal	Debra Korenkiewicz School Counselor	Michelle Cello Prevention Specialist
Lauren Fiske Assistant Principal	Kelly Lyman School Counselor	Michelle Lozito School Nurse
Andrew Kreider Assistant Principal	Megan Busby School Counselor	

SCHOOL COUNSELING PROGRAM

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.

The primary function of our School Counselors is to support students in the areas of academics, social/emotional, and career exploration needs. Some important duties of the MC6GC counselors include: 5th to 6th grade transition, individual and group counseling, communication between home and school, new student registration, course selection, and transition to the middle schools. Students are assigned counselors based on their team. Parents are welcome to contact the counselor to discuss any concerns.

Course Selection

The course selection process for 7th grade begins at the start of the third marking period. Students and parents will receive information and instructions for completing course selection online.

HOUSES AND INTERDISCIPLINARY TEAMS

In an effort to make a large school a more comfortable place to learn, The Marsh Creek Sixth Grade Center is divided into two houses (Blue and Gold) that feature four interdisciplinary teams.

Each team is composed of five interdisciplinary teachers who will teach the five Core Academic subjects: Language Arts (Writing and Literature), Math, Science, and Social Studies. Academic teams will comprise approximately 120 – 140 students; these students will be taking their Core Academic subjects together.

Students will be taking their "Encore", or "Special" subjects with students who may or may not be on their "Core" team.

GRADING SYSTEM

Grading Definitions

DASD issues report cards every forty-five days in an effort to provide families with information on student progress. In addition, assignment grades can be found online through the Parent Portal on the school website or through Schoology, our learning management system. Marking period grades are summative indicators of student performance in the taught and assessed DASD curriculum.

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 a 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

ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

The faculty of the Sixth Grade Center firmly believes it is important to recognize the efforts of students who demonstrate academic excellence. Honors are bestowed upon students whose grade reports reflect the following categories:

Distinguished = 'A's' in all courses
High = 'A's' in at least two **core** courses & more than half of all courses; 'B's' in remaining courses.
Regular = 'A's' in two courses. A maximum of one 'C', and 'B's' in remaining courses.

*Core courses: Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies.

OUTDOOR EDUCATION

In September and October, each interdisciplinary team will be traveling to a local educational camp, Paradise Farms (in Downingtown). Students, teachers, and administrators will participate in this all- outdoor program designed to facilitate team-building, resiliency, and environmental awareness.



BELL SCHEDULE

The Sixth Grade Center features a regular schedule of seven academic periods and one lunch/recess period on a six-day cycle.

SAMPLE BELL SCHEDULE

Marsh Creek Sixth Grade Center
Regular Schedule 2026-2027

TEAMS A-B	TEAMS C-D	TEAMS E-F	TEAMS G-H
Homeroom 9:00-9:14	Homeroom 9:00-9:14	Homeroom 9:00-9:14	Homeroom 9:00-9:14
Period 1 9:15-10:01	Period 1 9:15-10:01	Period 1 9:15-10:01	Period 1 9:15-10:01
Period 2 10:02-10:48	Period 2 10:02-10:48	Period 2 10:02-10:48	Period 2 10:02-10:48
Period 3* 10:49-11:35	Period 3 10:49-11:35	Period 3 10:49-11:35	Period 3 10:49-11:35
Period 4 11:36-12:22	Period 4 11:36-12:22	Period 4 11:36-12:22	Period 4* 11:36-12:22
Period 5 12:23-1:09	Period 5* 12:23-1:09	Period 5 12:23-1:09	Period 5 12:23-1:09
Period 6 1:10-1:56	Period 6 1:10-1:56	Period 6* 1:10-1:56	Period 6 1:10-1:56
Period 7 1:57-2:43	Period 7 1:57-2:43	Period 7 1:57-2:43	Period 7 1:57-2:43
Period 8 2:44-3:30	Period 8 2:44-3:30	Period 8 2:44-3:30	Period 8 2:44-3:30
Homeroom 3:30-3:35	Homeroom 3:30-3:35	Homeroom 3:30-3:35	Homeroom 3:30-3:35

*Lunch/Recess
*Lunch/Recess

RECESS

Every day, following lunch, there is a 16-minute Recess period. Students can also use this time to meet with a teacher for additional support if needed.

HOMEROOM

During this time, students can seek clarification or help with homework assignments,

organize their materials, seek guidance from their teachers, or engage in community/team-building activities. Homeroom is also a time when staff will coordinate planned school activities that emphasize teamwork, anti-bullying, social development, study skills acquisition, and other developmentally appropriate ideals.

INTRAMURAL, CLUBS, AND EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

The faculty at Marsh Creek recognizes that education extends beyond academics. Our school prioritizes meeting students' individual needs while fostering a sense of community and belonging as these are essential for learning. Students will have ample opportunities to build friendships and connections through shared interests.

Extracurricular activities are an important part of our community, whether through sports, music, drama, or other interest-based pursuits. Marsh Creek is committed to offering a comprehensive extracurricular program with after-school activities on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons from 3:35 pm to 4:30 pm. Seasonal intramural sports will be available, offering a variety of options for students. Clubs will be student-recommended and supported by faculty sponsors. Additionally, music ensemble performances and academic assistance will be part of the program. Information about these activities will be shared through school announcements, on Schoology, and on our website.

DOWNINGTOWN CYBER ACADEMY

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.

The entire Downingtown Cyber Academy selection of courses can be found online at 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. Students and parents are required to meet with their counselors to discuss online learning before students are enrolled in their courses.

PROGRAM OF STUDY

Each student's academic day consists of "Core" and "Encore" subjects. Some Encore subjects must be chosen by the student, while others are a fixed part of the curricular program. Encores meet twice each 6-day cycle.

If a student is receiving Learning Support Interventions, these classes are typically substituted for Encore classes, as are some of our Academic Support programs like Math Extensions, Reading Foundations, and Reading Comprehension.

ENCORES	
Music • Band Winds • Band Percussion • Orchestra	• Chorus • General Music
Engineering	
Art	
Health	

Physical Education
Introduction to German
Introduction to French
Introduction to Spanish
*+Reading Interventions
*+Math Extensions
+Study Skills Seminar
*Executive Functions Lab
*Writing Lab
*Math Skills Lab
*Functional Strategies
*Social Dynamics

* Enrollment in this course is determined by the IEP team

*+ Enrollment in this course is determined by Admin./IEP team

ART

The Art curriculum provides for sequential growth and development through Art Education. Student production of artwork requires student knowledge of the principles of composition, as well as painting, drawing, digital art and design, and three-dimensional artwork (sculpture, ceramics, and crafts). Art history education is incorporated throughout the course, encouraging a deeper understanding of the arts and their connection to culture, history, and society.

Authentic assessment of skills is practiced through student-created artwork, and students are provided opportunities to reflect upon, analyze, and exhibit their work. The critique and portfolio processes create a supportive atmosphere that allows all students to incorporate problem-solving and information-based decision-making.

Art is a course that meets twice per cycle.

ENGINEERING INVENTIONS

While it is important that students have the math and science background to do well in the engineering field, it is just as important that they understand the big ideas and principles behind engineering.

Engineering Inventions is an inquiry-based, hands-on course that asks students to design and invent devices - using the principles of engineering in order to solve real-world problems. Students will study Bio- Engineering, Aerospace Engineering, Energy, Construction, Manufacturing, and Robotics.

Engineering Inventions is an Encore course that meets twice per cycle.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

The sixth-grade English Language Arts (ELA) course is foundational, focusing on building strong habits for reading comprehension and analysis. Students will read a balanced mix of literary texts (myths, folktales, fantasy) and informational texts (science articles, historical accounts). A primary skill developed is identifying the central idea and supporting details in both fiction and non-fiction. Students learn to closely examine the structure of a story, identifying the plot, setting, and main characters, and how those elements develop

throughout the narrative. They will also analyze the impact of literary devices, such as metaphors and similes, and differentiate between a character's internal and external conflicts. The course also emphasizes expanding students' academic vocabulary through intentional instruction and repeated exposure within complex, context-rich texts.

A key focus of the course is developing clear and organized written and oral communication skills. Students practice writing in different modes, including narrative, informative, and argumentative essays. They develop the skills to introduce a topic clearly, group related information logically, and use transitional phrases to connect ideas smoothly. In narrative writing, students develop dialogue and descriptions to bring their stories to life. Students participate in structured group work and class discussions, where they practice active listening, ask clarifying questions, and effectively summarize information presented by others. These activities are designed to build confidence in collaborative learning and discussions.

This course equips students with the foundational research and media literacy skills essential for success in middle school. Students explore the distinctions between print and digital sources, learning how to evaluate credibility, synthesize information, and properly cite references to uphold academic integrity. Through guided inquiry, they develop strategies for locating, analyzing, and organizing information to answer a focused research question. By engaging with a range of media—including articles, short videos, and visual texts—students practice interpreting and critiquing information presented in multiple formats. Ultimately, this course empowers sixth-grade learners to become thoughtful consumers and creators of information who can communicate their ideas clearly and responsibly.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

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 the Pennsylvania Department of Education's Language Use Inventory.

GIFTED SUPPORT

Students who are identified as mentally gifted, and have GIEP services, receive enrichment opportunities to extend their learning beyond the scope and sequence of the regular education curriculum. Gifted services are scheduled through the GIEP process.

LEARNING SUPPORT

The Functional Strategies, Learning Support, and Social Dynamics programs support individual student IEPs. Teachers facilitate a learning environment in which the student can achieve goals and objectives. Students may be scheduled for FS/LS/SD classes in lieu of a choice of encore subjects.

FS/LS/SD classes or services are scheduled through the IEP process.

HEALTH

Health is a course that focuses on the connection between physical, mental, emotional, and social wellness in order to promote a healthy lifestyle. This course meets two times per cycle. There is a strong emphasis on mental and emotional well-being, with a focus on understanding feelings and practicing stress management skills. In addition, students learn and practice the life-saving skill of CPR and using an AED. Other units include the effects of nicotine, vaping,

smoking, drugs and alcohol, and the benefits of a balanced nutritional diet. Finally, the human growth and development unit discusses the changes within the endocrine system and the reproductive systems.

MATHEMATICS

Math 6

The math 6 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 higher-level math in middle and high school. The units of study include: Expressions, Equations, Inequalities, Decimals and Fractions: Base Ten Operations, Division with Fractions and Volume, Ratio Reasoning, Positive/Negative Numbers, and Statistical Thinking.

Math 6/7

The Math 6/7 program is designed for students ready for both 6th grade and half of 7th 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 advanced mathematical studies in 7th grade and beyond, with a strong focus on algebraic thinking, data analysis, and geometric concepts. The units of study include: Expressions, Equations, Inequalities, Decimals, and Fractions: Base Ten Operations, Division with Fractions and Volume, Ratio Reasoning, The Number System: Positive/Negative Numbers, Statistical Thinking, Proportional Relationships, Operations with Rational Numbers.

Mathematics is a Core course that meets daily.

Math Extensions

Math Extensions is a course offered to 6th-grade students by recommendation only. Students are enrolled in this course in addition to their regular mathematics classes. The purpose of this class is to increase students' basic mathematical and problem-solving skills.

Math Extensions enrollment meets two or four times per six-day cycle.

MUSIC

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

General Music: This course gives the students an opportunity to experience music through listening, creating original compositions, and performing on instruments while utilizing current music technology. Elements of music included in the course are: theory, styles, cultures, instruments, and current trends in music. General music does not provide the opportunity for public performances.

Band: In the large group rehearsal setting, Band instruction includes fundamentals in music performance of a variety of musical styles as well as music theory. Small group instrumental lessons provide students with opportunities to learn the proper techniques of playing their instruments and are scheduled on a rotating cycle. Students at all levels of ability are challenged to meet their own personal musical potential through home practice and lesson attendance. Band members perform two concerts each year. There are no beginning-level band classes and all students entering band at the 6GC 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: Choral students 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, music theory, tests, and quizzes. Grading is based on class demonstration, written work, vocal technique, rehearsals, and concerts. *Participation in this class may require payment of the DASD activity fee.*

String Orchestra: Students participating in orchestra meet twice per cycle in a large group rehearsal setting where they learn the fundamentals of performance in a variety of musical styles as well as music theory and history. Orchestra students are also scheduled for a small group lesson on a rotating basis. Small group lessons provide students with the necessary opportunities to learn proper techniques and also 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 6GC must have participated in an orchestra program for at least one year.

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

Music is an Encore course that meets twice per cycle.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Physical education is a course where students will explore various exercises and physical activities that they can use for a lifetime. This course meets 2x per cycle. The main focus being improving upon the main components of fitness such as flexibility, upper body strength, core strength, and cardiovascular fitness. Various team sports and cooperative group activities are also incorporated to encourage teamwork and cooperation.

READING

The Marsh Creek 6GC Reading Program promotes effective, proficient, and independent readers. The following courses are offered to provide instruction that best fits the individual needs of the sixth-grade student.

Linguistics

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

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

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

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

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

The 6th-grade science program, built on OpenSciEd's curriculum, immerses students in phenomena-based learning and inquiry, encouraging them to think and work like scientists. Students develop a deep understanding of key scientific concepts through hands-on investigations, collaboration, and the application of scientific practices. The curriculum emphasizes systems thinking, energy, matter, and ecology, providing students with foundational science knowledge to prepare them for future studies.

Science is a Core course that meets daily.

SOCIAL STUDIES

The Social Studies curriculum picks up the history of the United States from the study of pre-Columbian Indigenous Peoples in 5th grade. After a unit revolving around important concepts in Geography and Civics, students will investigate the European exploration and colonization of the North American Continent. They will examine what life was like in the American Colonies, and conclude with an in-depth study of the American Revolution providing a much broader view of the particular topics being studied.

Students will study the five themes of geography, history, and present-day culture of Mexico and Canada. Students will also study the American Revolution - beginning with the causes and ending with the Treaty of Paris. A variety of formative and summative assessments, such

as projects, written tests, and quizzes are used to gauge learning.

Social Studies is a Core course that meets daily.

WORLD LANGUAGES

The World Language courses provide a functional approach that emphasizes communication skills. Students are engaged in motivating activities that develop their ability to use the language authentically through extended sequential study. The program depicts everyday life and social customs in the countries and the cultures of the target languages. A variety of activities, designed to emphasize everyday situations, enable students to become skilled in interpersonal, interpretive, and presentational communication.

As the emphasis on instruction is on communication and understanding - using fun and engaging methods
– students will be expected to take chances and learn a world language the same way they learned their native language: authentically through immersion. Students will be encouraged to take chances.

Three courses will be offered:

- Introduction to Spanish
- Introduction to French
- Introduction to German

ADMINISTRATION

Dr. Robert J. O'Donnell	Superintendent
Dr. Robert Reed	Assistant Superintendent
Dr. Louis Chance	Assistant Superintendent
Bryan Howett	Business Manager
Dr. Caroline Duda	Director of Human Resources
Dr. Ann Berrios	Director of Pupil Services
Justin Brown	Director of Student Relations and School Climate
Kelly Harper	Director of Facilities
Dr. Gary Mattei	Director of Technology
Jennifer Shealy	Director of Public Relations
Marilyn Causey	Supervisor of Transportation
Patrick O'Connor	Food Service Director