

DOWNINGTOWN AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT

Middle School (7th and 8th grade) Academic Program 2016-2017



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Downingtown, PA 19335
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www.dasd.org/dms



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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 21st century global
“Good Neighbor” community.

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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,

Dr. Nicholas Indeglio

Dr. Nicholas Indeglio, Principal
Downingtown Middle School

Jonathan Ross

Jonathan Ross, Principal
Lionville Middle School

Middle Level Core Values

We believe that:

- ❖ Learning is a multi-faceted 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 21st 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 LEADERS

Administrators

Downingtown Middle School	
Dr. Nicholas Indeglio	Principal
Shawn Wright	Assistant Principal

Lionville Middle School	
Jonathan Ross	Principal
David Wiedlich	Assistant Principal

School Counselors

Downingtown Middle School	
Maramei Beatty	School Counselor
Kelly Lyman	School Counselor
Sally Witmer	School Counselor
Ildi Brown	Academic Advisor

Lionville Middle School	
Kristina Carter	School Counselor
Katrina Magaard	School Counselor
Robert Wells	School Counselor
George Phillips	Academic Advisor

Curriculum Leaders

Art	Julie Dimino
Business Education	Suzanne Hanbicki
English Language Arts	Deborah Kearney
ESL	To Be Determined
Family and Consumer Sciences	Elizabeth Stonaker
Guidance	Carol Warren
Health and Physical Education	Eric McComsey
Information Resources-Library	Claudia Carosella
Mathematics	Edward Merk
Music	Janine Weiss
Nurses	Diane Travis
Reading	Theresa Resto
Science	George Tucker
Social Studies	Sharon Jackson
Technology Education	Gavin Speirs
World Languages	Stacy Tukloff-Vansant

GRADING SYSTEM

Marking period letter grades are computed based upon student performance on assessments throughout the marking period. These 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 expectation 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 Guidance Office to schedule an appointment through the counseling secretary. If your concern requires you to leave class, you must first ask your teacher for a hall pass before coming up to see your counselor. Your counselor may also send you a guidance pass occasionally for a variety of reasons.*

The primary function of our School Counselors is to assist students in optimizing learning experiences at the middle school. School counselors address the academic, social/emotional and career exploration needs.

The counselors assist students and their parents/guardians with many aspects of education. Some important duties of the middle school counselors includes: individual and group counseling to students, communication between home and school, new student registration, course selection, career education and planning, and transition planning/programming for the outgoing 8th graders.

Students are assigned guidance counselors based on their team assignment at Lionville Middle School and by grade at Downingtown Middle School. 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, Naviance. Naviance 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’.

*Core courses: Language Arts/English, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies and World Language IB, I, II

SCHEDULING

The Middle School scheduling process begins during the third marking period. Students view their selection sheet online through eSchools+. The selection sheet contains their teachers’ recommendations for the following school year. Students indicate their selections for encore classes, when necessary, when they meet with their school counselor. All students and guardians receive information regarding scheduling from their student’s school counselor. No changes to students’ schedules will be made after the **first ten days of school for the ENCORE subject areas** and after the **first five weeks for CORE subject areas**. We do realize that there may be changes which will be IEP/GIEP driven.

SPECIAL SERVICES AND PROGRAMS

Adapted Physical Education	Career Counseling	Counseling and Guidance
English as a Second Language	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 AS A SECOND LANGUAGE (ESL)

ESL classes are for speakers of other languages who qualify based on an English language proficiency screening test. During class, the ESL teacher provides students with structured opportunities to learn and practice all the domains of second language acquisition: listening, speaking, reading and writing. The students develop content-based academic language as a prerequisite for success in academic programs as well as develop their knowledge of English so they may successfully participate in school, community, and social activities.

SUMMER SCHOOL

The Middle School Summer School Program is open to students residing in the Downingtown Area School District who have completed 7th or 8th grade and is designed for students who have demonstrated the need to strengthen academic skills. Students who attend will have the opportunity to improve their study habits, and review fundamental concepts for greater understanding in reading, writing and math. The program incorporates mathematics and language arts with specific study skills such as outlining, note taking, vocabulary, content area reading strategies, along with the higher level thinking skills of analysis and synthesis. Successfully completing Summer School may enable promotion for some students. Information with regard to retention/failures is available through the Counseling Office after the regular school year is completed in June. Dates, fees and other details are available from the Middle School Counseling Department or Main Office.

DOWNINGTOWN CYBER ACADEMY

Program Overview:

On February 9, 2010 the Downingtown Area School District Board of Education approved the opening of the Downingtown Area School District Cyber Academy program for the start of the 2011-12 school year. The Downingtown Cyber Academy, in conjunction with the Brandywine Virtual Academy (BVA) offers Downingtown Area secondary students currently enrolled in a Pennsylvania cyber charter school an opportunity to attain a Downingtown High School diploma through a district-coordinated cyber program.

The DASD Cyber Academy provides an opportunity to attend school fully online through our BVA partner or to blend online learning with attendance in one of our high school's rich offering of courses. The Downingtown Cyber Academy offers your child the chance to participate in our wide variety of award winning activities, clubs, after-school programs, and most importantly to receive a Downingtown High School Diploma.

The Cyber Academy officially began during the 2011-2012 school year for students in grades 6 through 12 who reside within the Downingtown Area School District and who are currently enrolled in a cyber charter academy.

Costs:

There is no cost to attend the Cyber Academy; however, students will be required to provide their own transportation to Downingtown High School East and West Campuses for traditional classes. Morning and afternoon transportation is available for students whose blended schedules coincide with regular AM and PM bus routes. Students will be issued a District laptop during school months only.

Course Offerings:

High school students may select courses that are available from the current Downingtown High School East/West Program of Study handbook. Students may also select courses available through Brandywine Virtual Academy. The BVA course catalog is available on-line www.cciu.org/bva.

All Pennsylvania Chapter 4 curriculum requirements are applicable and you will need to attain the requisite number of credits to graduate as prescribed by the Downingtown Area School District Board of Directors.

Brandywine Virtual Academy:

The following information describes the Brandywine Virtual Academy and was duplicated directly from the BVA website:

The Brandywine Virtual Academy (BVA) was formed by the cooperative efforts of the Chester County Intermediate Unit (CCIU) and the 21st Century Cyber Charter School (21CCCS), in order to provide schools the resources and flexibility to better serve their students. BVA offers a wide range of computer-based courses that students take over the Internet. Students may complete their courses from a school-based classroom, computer lab, home or other

locations with Internet access.

The courses are developed and taught by Pennsylvania-certified teachers located in Chester County. In addition, BVA curriculum (unlike national providers) includes and assesses Pennsylvania state standards. Thus, BVA delivers the same high quality instruction found in neighborhood schools.

A variety of courses and academic levels are available. Students may work at their own pace as long as they meet deadlines. Short-term, skill building and remedial coursework is also available. Since communication is integral to student success, BVA teachers are available by phone, in “virtual offices”, and by email. Teachers have frequent communication with students, primarily through email, and if requested, they will copy local school contacts on any electronic communications.

Enrollment:

For more information or to enroll, please contact Kristie Burk, District Cyber Coordinator, at 610-269-8460 x6230 or kristieburk@dasd.org. For current cyber charter students residing in the Downingtown Area School District interested in enrollment, an academic planning meeting will be conducted at Downingtown High School East or West Campus with a guidance counselor and administrator.

To finalize enrollment and the academic plan, parents or guardians will need to register their child with the District at 540 Trestle Place, Downingtown, PA. Appointments are necessary and can be scheduled at 610-269-8460.

PROGRAM OF STUDY – 7TH GRADE

Subject	Time Cycle
English	Daily, all year
Reading Foundations	Daily, all year
Reading Comprehension	Daily, all year
Science	Daily, all year
U.S. History	Daily, all year
Mathematics (<i>Pre-Algebra, Algebra I</i>)	Daily, all year
World Language (<i>Spanish, French, German</i>)	Level I or 1A - Daily, all year
<p><i>Take Level I or 1A of one language, and then Level II or 1B of the same language in 8th grade.</i></p> <p><i>Students still in need of Reading will take Reading Foundations or Reading Comprehension everyday in lieu of a World Language. If/When a student exits the Reading program, they will begin a language through the Rosetta Stone program.</i></p>	

Encore Courses- cycle based	
Technology Education	Art
Family & Consumer Sciences	Physical Education
Health	General Music, Chorus, Vocal Ensemble, Concert Choir, Band, or Strings
Contemporary Writing (criteria based)	Math Extensions (teacher recommendation required)
Advanced Writing (criteria based)	Gifted Education Program (GIEP required)
	Special Education Program (IEP required)

PROGRAM OF STUDY – 8TH GRADE

Subject	Time Cycle
English	Daily, all year
Science	Daily, all year
U.S. History	Daily, all year
Mathematics (<i>Algebra II, Algebra I, Algebra IA</i>)	Daily, all year
Reading Foundations	Daily, all year
Reading Comprehension	Daily, all year
World Language (<i>Spanish, French, German</i>)	Daily, all year
<p><i>Students who have succeeded in a World Language Level IA will take Level IB.</i></p> <p><i>Students who have succeeded in a World Language Level I will take Level II.</i></p> <p><i>Students beginning a World Language in 8th grade will take Level I.</i></p> <p><i>Students still in need of Reading will take Reading Foundations or Reading Comprehension everyday in lieu of a World Language. If/When a student exits the Reading program, they will begin a language through the Rosetta Stone program.</i></p>	

Encore Courses- cycle based	
Advanced Writing (criteria based)	Contemporary Writing (criteria based)
Family & Consumer Sciences	Physical Education
Health	General Music, Chorus, Vocal Ensemble, Concert Choir, Wind Ensemble, Band or Strings
Health- First Aid and Athletic Training; CPR/AED (prerequisite required)	
Technology Education	Math Extensions (teacher recommendation required)
Gifted Education Program (GIEP required)	Art
Special Education Program (IEP required)	

ART

The Middle School Art curriculum provides sequential growth and development through discipline-based Art education. Students experience painting, drawing, digitally created, and three-dimensional art work (sculpture, ceramics, and crafts) through the study of the elements of art and principles of design. Art history is incorporated throughout, encouraging a deeper understanding of the arts and its connections to culture, history, and society. Students use authentic assessment to reflect, analyze, and evaluate art. Students interested in learning more about art, experiencing new techniques and skills, and those who want to express themselves creatively will enjoy art in the 7th and 8th grades.

ENGLISH

7th grade:

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

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

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

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

8th Grade:

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

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

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

is intended to support and cultivate life-long reading.

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

Advanced Writing:

The Advanced Writing course focuses on language, techniques, and traditions of nonfiction, fiction, drama, and poetry in order to develop a facility for both enjoying and contextualizing the variety of literature and nonfiction required of 21st Century Learners. Students will read, discuss and analyze works of established authors, engage in writing intensive exercises that address elements of craft (voice, character, image, scene, setting, etc), learn revision through the workshop process, and participate in workshop sessions. Students will deeply investigate strategies that authors use to craft their poetry and prose to effectively communicate ideas and engage in real world application of writing beyond the academic setting. By the end of the course, students will present a portfolio of their work.

Criteria for entrance: This course is designed for students who would benefit from a rigorous and creative communication elective as demonstrated by an advanced score on the previous years' ELA PSSA, PVAAS projection data, and/or teacher input.

Contemporary Writing:

The Contemporary Writing course focuses on literacy and writing strategies to support students in an academic setting. Students will review and practice the fundamental elements of the writing process in an effort to produce quality work. Using exemplar texts, students will investigate strategies that authors use to craft their poetry and prose to effectively communicate ideas. By the end of the course, students will demonstrate effective writing techniques.

Criteria for entrance: This course is designed for students who are not currently receiving, but, would benefit from writing support as demonstrated by the previous years' ELA PSSA scores, teacher input and PVAAS projection data. Students who demonstrate proficiency on the PSSA will be eligible to exit the course at the end of the school year.

FAMILY AND CONSUMER SCIENCES (FCS)

The 7th grade FCS course includes child development, food science, nutrition, financial and resource management, and balancing work, family and community resources. Time management, nutrition and kitchen experience are gained through classroom lab work and reinforced through a project completed at home. An understanding of consumer rights and responsibility is emphasized.

The 8th grade FCS course includes units on food science, nutrition, financial and resource management, and balancing work, family and community responsibilities. Energy requirements in the life cycle, physical and chemical changes in food preparation, financial management practices, housing and conservation are also included in this course.

GIFTED EDUCATION

The Gifted Support classrooms are staffed by teachers specializing in gifted education. Students work both individually and in groups. Interaction among students working toward common outcomes is an important aspect of the program. The teacher facilitates a balance among various activities in order to maximize student achievement. Some homework may be assigned in the gifted education classes, particularly special projects involving collection of data/research. Students may be scheduled for gifted education classes in lieu of a choice of core subjects. The middle level gifted education environment stresses: student self-motivation, independent choice of activities, organization, as well as interaction among students and between student and teacher.

Evaluation/Reporting Progress: Progress-monitoring reports will be sent home twice a year at the conclusion of the 2nd and 4th marking periods. These progress-monitoring reports will outline specific and comprehensive feedback regarding the student's progress toward identified outcome areas in the G.I.E.P.; the report is based on qualitative and quantitative assessments conducted throughout the school year. Please note that this does not take the place of traditional parent-teacher communication, graded student assignments, teacher observation, thematic rubrics and working portfolios. In addition, understand that the progress monitoring reports will not impact/affect student eligibility for honor roll or distinguished honor roll status nor will it affect GPA or overall school ranking as this is not attributed until 9th grade. To ensure that your child's involvement in the Downingtown Area School District Gifted Program is part of his/her permanent school record, the report card will list the Gifted Education class. This will be documentation that your child participated in a course exclusive to students identified as "mentally gifted" under Chapter 16 law.

HEALTH

The General Health curriculum is 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 and safety and injury prevention. Topics included in the middle school health program are: life skills, systems of the body, human growth and development, chemical substances, alcohol and tobacco, dental hygiene, mental health, diseases, eating disorders, anger management, and self-esteem. It is the intent that the student will acquire or further develop worthwhile habits, knowledge, skills and attitudes that will last a lifetime. Parents have the right to opt their child out of the Human Growth and Development unit by completing and returning the letter sent to each family. Students who opt out will be assigned an alternate health unit of study.

A new course for the 2016-2017 school year is First Aid and Athletic Training ~ CPR/AED. This course provides students with an opportunity to gain life skills that can be applied in everyday life situations. The course certifies the students in American Red Cross First Aid/CPR/AED. The course provides 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. In order to take this course, **a prerequisite is required**. Students must have already taken 7th grade Health, or must be currently enrolled in 8th grade Health. *Participation in this class will require payment for First Aid/CPR/AED Certification.*

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 PSSA, performance on prior course assessments and successful completion of pre-requisite courses.

7th Grade Mathematics:

Students in 7th grade will be offered Pre-Algebra or Algebra I (see below). At the end of 7th grade, multiple mathematics criteria will be considered by middle school staff for 8th grade placement: 7th grade grades, end-of-year assessment, PSSA, Algebra I readiness assessment, and teacher assessment of skills.

Pre-Algebra emphasizes the use of variables, equations, and inequalities to solve problems. Topics include integers, rational numbers, probability, percent, geometry, and graphing.

Algebra I is offered to students in 7th grade who have performed well according to the Algebra I readiness rubric. This rubric criterion includes: PSSA performance, teacher recommendation, performance in 6th grade mathematics, and performance on the Algebra readiness assessment.

Algebra I is also offered to 8th graders who have successfully completed Pre-Algebra in 7th grade. 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 graphic linear equations and inequalities.

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

Algebra IA is offered to 8th grade students. This course is the first year of a two-year Algebra I course designed to introduce students to Algebraic concepts. The course will begin with an introduction to equations. Additional topics for students to learn in this course are: geometric transformations; angles and triangles; linear equations; systems of linear equations; linear and nonlinear functions; real numbers; volume and similar solids; data analysis and displays; exponents and scientific notation; while ongoing skill building, problem solving, and completion of open-ended responses are further developed. Students will take Algebra I-B in 9th grade upon successful completion of Algebra I-A in 8th grade. Algebra I-A and I-B are a two-year Algebra I Keystone course. Students will have to take the PA Algebra I Keystone Exam upon completion of Algebra I-B.

Math Extensions is a course offered to 7th and 8th grade students by recommendation only. Students are enrolled in this course, in addition to their regular mathematics classes, two or four times per six-day cycle. The purpose of this class is to offer student pre-teaching and review opportunities in conjunction with the mathematics instruction offered in Pre-Algebra, Algebra 1A, and Algebra I.

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 is offered in 7th and 8th 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, guitar, 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 7th and 8th 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 8th graders who meet musical performance criteria. Jazz Band is an after-school group available to 7th and 8th 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 7th and 8th 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. Vocal Ensemble is an advanced level choir available to 7th and 8th graders who audition in the spring for placement for the following school year. This class replaces the chorus class and students learn both advanced repertoire as well as their regular chorus songs. In all classes, 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 class may require payment of the DASD activity fee.*

String Orchestra is offered to students in 7th and 8th grades. Students participating in orchestra meet twice per cycle in a large group rehearsal setting where they learn the fundamentals of performance through a 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 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 7th and 8th 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 the following state standards: safety and injury prevention, physical activities that promote fitness, affects of regular participation in physical activity, response of the body systems to physical activity, physical activity preferences, motor skill improvement, physical activity and group interaction, and concepts, principles, and strategies of movement. It is our intent that students acquire or further develop healthy habits, knowledge, skills, and attitudes that will last a lifetime.

READING

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

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

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

SCIENCE

7th Grade Science:

7th Grade Science is broken into two modules that each span one semester of the school year. The fall consists of an introduction to topics in ecology such as the form and function of adaptations, natural selection, and the construction of interdependent relationships between organisms and their surrounding environment.

The spring semester will introduce students to topics in physics related to motion caused by the interaction of objects and the transfer and use of energy.

Students engage with these topics through hands-on activities, field experiences, and projects that require the development and use of models, the planning and carrying out of investigations, and the analysis and interpretation of data to construct explanations.

8th Grade Science:

8th Grade Science is broken into two modules that each span one semester of the school year. The fall consists of an introduction to topics in chemistry such as the classification of matter, atomic structure, construction and contents of the Periodic Table of Elements, and the interactions between and within atoms.

The spring semester will introduce students to topics in biology. These topics include the basic structure and function of cells as well as heredity and the transfer of genetic information from one generation to the next.

Students engage with these topics through hands-on activities, field experiences, and projects that require the development and use of models, the planning and carrying out of investigations, and the analysis and interpretation of data to construct explanations.

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.

7th Grade: History of the United States, American Revolution to the Civil War:

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

8th Grade: History of the United States (1850-1918):

Units of study include the Civil War, Reconstruction, Progressivism, United States Imperialism and World War I. Assessment of learning encompasses a variety of formats and may include: projects, written tests, quizzes and student presentations. Writing is incorporated into the 8th 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.

Direct Instruction is offered in English and Mathematics. Students needing less support may be placed in supported classes. 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. 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 also a district-wide Life Skills program housed at Downingtown Middle School and an Emotional Support class at each middle school. Autism support is provided at Downingtown and Lionville Middle Schools in a varied model.

TECHNOLOGY EDUCATION

Technology Education is an activity-based curriculum that is based off of the Project Lead The Way (PLTW)-Gateway Curriculum. Students in 7th and 8th elect one of the PLTW courses and take the course 2 x's a cycle over the course of the academic year (excluding Engineering).

PROJECT LEAD THE WAY (PLTW)

Gateway to Technology (GTT) is the PLTW middle level program. Throughout GTT, students acquire knowledge and skills in problem solving, teamwork, and innovation as well as explore STEM careers. Downingtown Area School District offers four units of study at the middle level:

Energy and the Environment - Students are challenged to think big and toward the future as they explore sustainable solutions to our energy needs and investigate the impact of energy on our lives and the world. They design and model alternative energy sources and evaluate options for reducing energy consumption.

Science of Technology - Science impacts the technology of yesterday, today, and the future. Students apply the concepts of physics, chemistry, and nanotechnology to STEM activities and projects, including making ice cream, cleaning up an oil spill, and discovering the properties of nano-materials.

Design and Modeling - In this unit, 8th grade 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.

Automation and Robotics – In this unit, 8th grade 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.

Engineering: Future Cities Team is offered to 8th 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 of Project Lead the Way courses currently offered at the middle level.

WORLD LANGUAGES

Middle School World Language Options: French, German, or Spanish

7 th Grade	8 th Grade	Grade 9
Level 1A	Level 1B	Level 2
Level 1	Level 2	Level 3

The main objective of the *World Language Curriculum* is to develop competence in the ability to understand, speak, read, and write in the target language, and to provide, through the knowledge of the language, an understanding and appreciation of literatures and cultures.

World Language courses at the middle level seek to:

- Create meaningful experiences while using the new language and learning about the culture;
- Develop capacity to communicate effectively in real-life situations;
- Promote healthy attitudes about people of other cultures;
- Provide motivation for continued language study.

Level 1A is equivalent to the first semester of a high school **Level 1** class.

Level 1B is equivalent to the second semester of a high school **Level 1** class.

By “stretching” the **Level 1** curriculum over two years, students will have more time to learn and practice the basics. **Levels 1A** and **1B** introduce students to the four basic language skills associated with the culture: listening comprehension, speaking, reading, and writing. Additionally, students acquire skills through short composition, dictation, storytelling, written exercises, group projects, and exposure to authentic resources. The two-year progression provides a smooth transition that will more than adequately prepare students to be successful in a world language of their choice at the high school level.

- **Level 1A and Level 1B Student Learning Outcomes:** Students successfully completing Levels 1A and 1B will be able to engage in simple interpersonal exchanges in which culturally appropriate conversational conventions are employed and to perform basic speech acts such as greetings, exchange of names, politeness, and leave-taking. Students will also be able to write short, personalized essays using complete, grammatically-correct sentences.
- **Level 1A Student Learning Outcomes:**
 - Describe topics of day-to-day relevance, including studies, friends and other people, likes and dislikes, sports and pastimes;
 - Become familiar with culture and traditions, and their influence on daily life where the target language is spoken;
 - Read short, contextualized passages for comprehension;
 - Use correctly present tense forms of regular and irregular verbs;
 - Engage in formal and informal speaking with classmates and with the teacher.
- **Level 1B Student Learning Outcomes:**
 - Demonstrate a greater [than in Level 1A] working command of essential vocabulary and language structures such as describing family, the home and chores, clothes and shopping, and foods prepared and eaten while dining out;
 - Continue to develop and strengthen the ability to communicate correctly.

Level 1 of a World Language: Level 1 as a middle school course is the same curriculum as the high school Level 1 course. While a middle school student will not earn “credit” for a Level I course, Level 1 content and expectations are equivalent to those of a full-year high school course. Students taking Level 1 of a world language at the middle level need to be able to manage the demands imposed by the academic rigor of a high school course. For example, successful middle school Level 1 language learners complete all assignments on time and possess well-developed study skills.

Considerations:

- It is recommended that students desiring to switch languages in eighth grade enroll in Level 1 of the newly selected language in order to progress to Level 2 at the high school.
- Students who begin world language courses in the middle grades will develop good language learning skills, such as paying attention to context clues, repeating sounds, and making mistakes and learning from them. Beginning an extended progression of language study in the middle years provides students with the opportunity to become proficient learners of the target language. When the path continues throughout high school, students are able to enter the university level or the world of work with a useable level of language mastership. (National Council of State Supervisors of Foreign Language Position Paper, pp. 2-3)
- While high school credit is not offered for any world language courses taken at the middle level, the rigor of the program a student selects is important when considering college readiness. For example, a college admissions office will recognize the rigor of a completed program where the learner is able to enroll in a level 3 language course as a 9th grade student. Also, ***“Colleges prefer to see proficiency in one language; this will strengthen your application.”*** (Foreign Language Requirements for College Application, about.com, October 27, 2015.)

Pursuant to applicable Federal and State laws and regulations, the Downingtown Area School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, religions, creed, color, national origin or sex.