

DOWNINGTOWN AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT  
2010-2011

**MIDDLE SCHOOL  
ACADEMIC PROGRAM**



**Downingtown Middle School**  
115 Rock Raymond Road  
Downingtown, PA 19335  
610-518-0685  
<http://www.dasd-dms.org>

**Lionville Middle School**  
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610-524-6300  
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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 21<sup>st</sup> 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 where 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.

Middle schools in Downingtown Area School District organize the student population into smaller academic teams. Teams of teachers representing the core subject areas are assigned to a common group of students. The teams of 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.

In 6th grade, students begin their middle school experience with greater support from their teachers with regard to organizational strategies and study skills; learning to learn is an important part of the 6th grade program. As students progress through 7th and 8th grades, these formal structures and supports are diminished so that students become more independent learners. While offering a core academic curriculum in Language Arts, Math, Science, Social Studies, Reading and World Language, we address the wide spectrum of students' needs through instructional strategies and designs. Our encore program offers students a wide array of opportunities to explore Computer Applications, Health, Physical Education, Music, Art, Technology Education and Family & 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 our partner in supporting them through these transitional years.

Sincerely,

Thomas Mulvey, Principal  
Downingtown Middle School

Judy Groh, Principal  
Lionville Middle School

## *Building a **Bridge** to a Better Tomorrow*

*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 that must be supported and nurtured by a physically and emotionally safe learning environment.
- ✚ Each student will reach his/her potential through actively engaging curricula that builds academic competence.
- ✚ Each student must actively participate in social and academic development by accepting responsibility, understanding consequences and committing to his/her personal best.
- ✚ Each student will actively value and demonstrate mutual and self-respect in order to strengthen our diverse school community.
- ✚ Each student will develop into a confident and ethical citizen through integrity and self-reliance.
- ✚ Each student, staff member, and family must openly communicate and interact in order to develop productive, contributing citizens within our school, local and global communities.
- ✚ Each student must be prepared for the 21<sup>st</sup> century global society in which learning becomes a life-long passion.
- ✚ Each staff member deserves effective professional development, including adequate time, resources and interdisciplinary collaboration, to promote personal growth and excellence in education.

*DASD Middle Level Steering Committee, June, 2007*

**2009-10 MIDDLE SCHOOL  
ADMINISTRATIVE, GUIDANCE AND  
CURRICULUM LEADER PERSONNEL**

**ADMINISTRATORS**

**Downingtown Middle School**

Thomas Mulvey, Principal  
Frank Dardine, Assistant Principal  
  
Karen Grimm, Assistant Principal

**Lionville Middle School**

Judy Groh, Principal  
Nicholas Argonish, Assistant  
Principal  
Tucker Birkhead, Assistant  
Principal

**GUIDANCE**

**Downingtown Middle School**

Megan Busby  
Aaron Jones  
Kelly Joseph  
Deb Mallon  
Ryan Farrell, Academic Advisor

**Lionville Middle School**

Emily Ernest  
Jessica Knier  
Sue McGrath  
Rob Wells  
George Phillips, Academic Advisor

**CURRICULUM LEADERS**

Art.....	Carol Prokop, DMS
Computer Applications.....	Lois Grasso, LMS
English/Language Arts.....	Kelly Dunn, DMS
Assistant Curriculum Leader	Holly Backenstose, LMS
ESL .....	Terri Marmugi, DW
Family & Consumer Sciences .....	Donna Kneisly, DW
Gifted Education .....	Judy Kroboth, LMS
Guidance.....	Deb Mallon, DMS
LearningSupport.....	Rae Ann Lukavsky, DMS
Assistant Curriculum Leader	Barb Mainello, LMS
Mathematics.....	Karen Sullivan, LMS
Assistant Curriculum Leader	Lynn Hamlin, DMS
Music.....	Floyd Rawleigh, DMS
Phys. Ed. / Health .....	Alison Hady, LMS
Assistant Curriculum Leader	Dave DiVito, DMS
Science.....	Deb Hoover, LMS
Assistant Curriculum Leader	Beth Burkhardt, DMS
Social Studies .....	Katherine Murphy, LMS
Assistant Curriculum Leader	Sharon Jackson, DMS
Technology Education .....	Laury Grant, LMS
World Language .....	Rebecca Wilks, DMS

**GUIDANCE 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 guidance 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 Guidance 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 incoming 6<sup>th</sup> and the outgoing 8<sup>th</sup> graders.

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

**SCHEDULING:**

The Middle School scheduling process begins at the beginning of the third marking period. Students are provided with a course selection sheet that contains their teacher's recommendations for the following school year. Students are also able to indicate their selections for encore classes on their course selection sheet. Parents are required to sign their child's course selection sheet prior to submission to the Guidance Department. All students attend an informational scheduling presentation conducted by their school counselor and further course selection information is sent home to all parents as well. 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.

**GUIDANCE** (continued)

**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 in the fall and spring. 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, Career Cruising. Career Cruising 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.

**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

**GRADING SYSTEM** (continued)

- 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**

<b>Learning Behaviors</b> are marked on the report card as follows: <b>S = Strength                    I= Shows Improvement</b> <b>N = Needs Improvement</b>
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

**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 (one must be a core\* course). A maximum of one ‘C’ and all rest ‘B’s’.

\*Core courses: Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies and World Language, Levels I, II.

## SUMMER SCHOOL

The Middle School Summer School Program is open to students residing in the Downingtown Area School District who have completed 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> grad 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 Guidance Office after the regular school year is completed in June. Dates, fees and other details are available from the Middle School Guidance or Main Office.



## SPECIAL SERVICES

Adapted Physical Education  
 Counseling and Guidance  
 Vocational/Career Guidance  
 Psychological Services  
 SAS (Student Assistance Services)  
 Downingtown Educational Enrichment Program (DEEP)  
 Special Education Services  
 English as a Second Language  
 Hearing Services  
 Speech Services  
 Vision Services  
 Library

Additional information can be obtained through the Guidance Counselors.

## PROGRAM OF STUDIES – 6<sup>TH</sup> GRADE

### Subject

### Time Cycle

#### Language Arts

- Literature
- Writing

Daily, all year

Daily, all year

#### Science

Daily, all year

#### Social Studies

Daily, all year

*(Students reading 2 years or more below grade level will drop Social Studies and take Reading Foundations, all year course)*

#### Mathematics

Daily, all year

Levels 01 – 02 – 03 or Innovative Math

### Encore Blocks

#### Block 1

(1-each 45 day session)

Art

Computer Applications

Health

Technology Education

#### Block 2

(3-2 times per cycle)

Reading Comprehension or Strategic Reading

Physical Education

Study Skills (for students in Reading Foundations)

General Music, Band, Chorus, or Strings

Gifted Education Program ( IEP required)  
 Special Education Program (IEP required)

## PROGRAM OF STUDIES – 7th GRADE

<u>Subject</u>	<u>Time Cycle</u>
<b>Language Arts</b>	
• Literature	Daily, all year
• Writing	Daily, all year
<b>Science</b>	Daily, all year
<b>U.S. History</b>	Daily, all year
<b>Mathematics</b>	Daily, all year
	Algebra I, Pre-Algebra, 7 <sup>th</sup> Grade Math or Innovated Math
<b>World Language</b>	Level I - Daily, all year OR
Spanish, French, German	Exploratory – Daily, three quarter
<i>Take Level I of one language, and then Level II of the same language in 8<sup>th</sup> grade OR</i>	
<i>Take Exploratory language, one each marking period and then one option from Block I OR</i>	
<i>Take all of Block I and wait until 8<sup>th</sup> grade to start a World Language.</i>	

### Encore Blocks

<b>Block 1 (1 each-45 days)</b>	<b>Block 2 (3-2 times per cycle)</b>
Computer Applications	Art
Family & Consumer Sciences	Physical Education
Health	Reading Foundations or Reading Comprehension
Technology Education	General Music, Chorus, Vocal Ensemble, Concert Choir, Band, or Strings
Gifted Education Program (IEP required)	
Special Education Program (IEP required)	

## PROGRAM OF STUDIES – GRADE 8

<u>Subject</u>	<u>Time Cycle</u>
<b>English</b>	Daily, all year
<b>Science</b>	Daily, all year
<b>U.S. History</b>	Daily, all year
<b>Mathematics</b>	Daily, all year
	Algebra II, Algebra I, Pre-Algebra or Innovative Math
<b>World Language</b>	Level I – Daily, all year
Spanish French, German	Level II – Daily, all year
	Exploratory – Daily, three quarters
<i>Students who have succeeded in a World Language Level I may take Level II.</i>	
<i>Students beginning a World Language in 8<sup>th</sup> grade will take Level I or Exploratory. If you choose Exploratory, you will take EXPLORE Research or Reading Comprehension.</i>	
<i>Students still in need of reading will take Reading Foundations everyday in lieu of a World Language.</i>	

### Encore

<b>Block 1 (1 each-45 day session)</b>	<b>Block 2 (3-2 times per cycle)</b>
Computer Applications	Art
Family & Consumer Sciences	Physical Education
Health	General Music, Chorus, Vocal Ensemble, Concert Choir, Wind Ensemble, Band or Strings
Technology Education	
Gifted Education Program (IEP required)	
Special Education Program (IEP required)	

## **ART**

The Art curriculum is designed to provide sequential growth and development through a discipline-based program. Drawing, painting, 3-dimensional art; composition such as crafts, sculpture and ceramics are explored. Art appreciation is incorporated into the curriculum encouraging a deeper understanding of the visual arts and its connections to cultural, historical and societal content.

Authentic assessment is used not only as an evaluative tool, but also as a tool to reflect and analyze art work. The critique and portfolio process help students gain valuable insight into problem-solving and artistic decision-making. Art is offered all three years of middle school. In 6th grade, students meet every day for one (45 days) marking period. Seventh and 8th grade students meet twice in a six day cycle for the entire year (60 days total).

## **COMPUTER APPLICATIONS**

The Computer Applications curriculum is offered to 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students. The integration of computers to our daily lives is essential for success both in school and the workplace. Our three-year curriculum covers a broad range of hands-on computer and technology skills including: keyboarding, word processing, desktop publishing, spread sheets, databases, presentation software, Internet literacy, webpage design, photo editing and working with scanners and digital cameras. Students progress through levels of skills to the point where they can easily use today's computer technology to complete classroom assignments and understand the relationship between technology and other disciplines.

## **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 skills are gained through a meal management project. An understanding of consumer rights and responsibility is emphasized.

The 8<sup>th</sup> 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 encore 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 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> 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 9<sup>th</sup> 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.

*DASD Parents of Gifted Students  
MOODLE*

<http://moodle.dasd.org/course/view.php?id=534>

*Login as a guest  
(no password/username required)*

## **HEALTH**

The Health curriculum is offered in 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> grades. It is important during these formative years that students acquire a knowledge base to make healthy lifestyle decisions. Students will view health as a state of physical, mental, intellectual and social well-being. The course content is designed to meet the following state standards: concepts of health, healthful living and safety and injury prevention. Topics included in the middle school health program are: systems of the body, human sexuality, 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.

## **LANGUAGE ARTS AND ENGLISH**

### **6<sup>th</sup> GRADE**

Sixth graders enroll in two periods of Language Arts for the entire school year, one period of Literature and one of Writing. These courses are scheduled separately, and students receive a grade for each course.

Student competency is demonstrated in the PSSA Reading and Writing Assessments, benchmarks, tests and district-wide performance tasks such as curriculum-based interdisciplinary projects.

### **Writing**

The 6<sup>th</sup> grade writing curriculum is designed to further develop the strategies needed to become a better writer, speaker, listener, and critical thinker. Students write for a variety of purposes which include: reading for information, technical reading, expository writing, creative writing and writing poetry. As part of the program, students enrich vocabulary, grammar and spelling skills through integrated methods and multi-media presentations.

The writing program provides a variety of writing opportunities for developing writers. The formal composition program reinforces single paragraph writing and introduces multi-paragraph themes across all genres. Creative writing assignments/projects are integral to the program. Usage, sentence structure, sentence variety, and seven parts of speech are the focus of grammar; punctuation and format are emphasized as all are applied to writing.

## **LANGUAGE ARTS/ENGLISH** (continued)

Students build their speaking skills by learning strategies and practicing formation and information speeches across the curriculum. Students also develop listening strategies that will enhance their responses in all of their classes.

### **Literature**

The 6<sup>th</sup> grade literature curriculum is designed to further develop the strategies needed to become a better reader, listener and critical thinker. Students read for a variety of purposes which include: reading for literary experience, reading for information as well as technical reading, all of which support Pennsylvania's state standards. Literature study includes fiction and informational non-fiction, novels, short stories, essays, autobiographies, poetry, drama, and oral traditions. In addition to understanding, analyzing, and interpreting and evaluating literature, students develop critical thinking skills and expand their vocabulary. Finally, students complete assigned self-selected readings designed to expose them to a full spectrum of reading genres; this exposure is intended to support life-long reading.

### **7<sup>th</sup> GRADE**

In 7<sup>th</sup> grade, students enroll in two periods of Language Arts for the entire school year, one period of Literature and one of Writing. These courses are scheduled separately and students receive grades for each course. This is similar to the 6<sup>th</sup> grade schedule, however, students are recommended for their level of study. The Level 02 course is on grade level, whereas Level 01 contains higher expectations for accelerated, stronger readers and writers.

Student competency is demonstrated in the PSSA Reading and Writing Assessments, and district-wide performance tasks such as curriculum-based interdisciplinary projects.

### **Writing**

In 7<sup>th</sup> grade, the writing program provides a variety of writing opportunities for developing writers. The formal composition program introduces informational writing from the single paragraph to multi-paragraph themes with emphasis on the three paragraph essay. Creative writing assignments/projects are also a part of the program.

## LANGUAGE ARTS/ENGLISH (continued)

Usage, sentence structure, sentence variety, and the eight parts of speech are the focus of grammar; mechanics, usage and format are emphasized as all are applied to writing.

Students build their speaking skills by learning strategies and practicing formal and informal speeches across the curriculum. Students also develop listening strategies that will enhance their responses in all of their classes.

### Literature

The 7<sup>th</sup> grade Language Arts Literature course strengthens students' reading comprehension skills and focuses on literary analysis by examining many different genres and text structures in short stories, novels, poetry, drama, and oral traditions. Students read a selected literature and decode text using several different reading strategies, all of which support Pennsylvania's state standards. In addition to understanding, analyzing, interpreting and evaluating literature, students develop critical thinking skills and expand their vocabulary. This exposure is intended to support and cultivate life-long reading.

### 8<sup>th</sup> GRADE

The 8<sup>th</sup> grade English Program prepares and challenges students to read, write, listen and speak effectively. It is an integrated, comprehensive program that emphasizes higher order thinking built upon a foundation of knowledge, skills, and strategies. Students are recommended by 7<sup>th</sup> grade teachers for Level 01 or Level 02. 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 is based upon the following standards and benchmarks:

- use a variety of technological and informational skills and resources to gather and synthesize information and to create and communicate findings
- employ a wide range of reading strategies to comprehend interpret, and evaluate various kinds of texts
- employ the strategies of the writing process to communicate effectively for a wide variety of purposes
- evaluate and respond critically to diverse forms of literature and demonstrate understanding of important features as well as the historical and cultural context
- use spoken language and listening skills to communicate effectively with a variety of audiences and for different purposes

## 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 prerequisite courses. Incoming 6<sup>th</sup> grade students will be placed in mathematics courses using multiple criteria from 5<sup>th</sup> grade mathematics: grades, end-of-year assessment, PSSA, SME, and teacher assessment of skills. Throughout the first semester, student performance will be monitored and placement may be adjusted if necessary.

At the end of 6<sup>th</sup> grade, multiple mathematics criteria will be considered by middle school staff for 7<sup>th</sup> grade placement: 6<sup>th</sup> grade grades, end-of-year assessment, PSSA, and teacher assessment of skills.

**6<sup>th</sup> Grade Mathematics Level 01** is a fast-paced mathematics course that focuses on developing advanced, multi-step problem-solving skills that require critical thinking. This course includes Pre-Algebra concepts and conceptual and abstract thinking about mathematics. This course prepares students for Pre-Algebra or Algebra I in 7<sup>th</sup> grade.

**6<sup>th</sup> Grade Mathematics Level 02** focuses on building an in-depth understanding of the concepts of mathematics and problem-solving strategies. This course prepares students for Pre-Algebra.

**6<sup>th</sup> Grade Mathematics Level 03** focuses on building a solid foundation in problem-solving, numeracy and mathematics literacy. This course prepares students for 7<sup>th</sup> grade mathematics, or for some students, Pre-Algebra.

**Pre-Algebra** emphasizes the use of variables, equations, and inequalities to solve problems. Topics include integers, rational numbers, probability, percent, geometry, and graphing. This course is offered to 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students who have successfully completed 6<sup>th</sup> grade mathematics Level 01/02 or 7<sup>th</sup> grade mathematics.

**Algebra I** is offered to students in 7<sup>th</sup> grade who have performed well according to the Algebra I readiness rubric. This rubric criteria includes: PSSA performance, teacher recommendation, performance in 6<sup>th</sup> grade mathematics Level 01, and performance on the Algebra Readiness Exam. Algebra I is also offered to 8<sup>th</sup> graders who have successfully completed Pre-Algebra in 7<sup>th</sup> grade.

## **MATHEMATICS** (continued)

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 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)

**Innovative Mathematics** is offered in 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades for students who struggle with traditional mathematics. The course is based on guided discovery through real world applications and thought-provoking mathematical questions. Emphasis is placed on the use of manipulatives and collaborative work to investigate various strategies to solve problems. This course curriculum is considered to be on grade level.

**Math Plus Program** is a course offered to 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> 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 increase students' basic mathematical and problem-solving skills.

**Testing Out:** Students may test out of a mathematics course for placement into a sequential course. The student must demonstrate proficiency of the course standards by achieving a 90% or better on an assessment determined by the district. Testing must be completed at least one week prior to the first student day of school. No such testing will be offered after that date.

## **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** offered in grades 6, 7, and 8, 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, technology, cultures, instruments and current trends in music. General music does not provide the opportunity for public performances.

## **MUSIC** (continued)

**Band** is offered in grades 6, 7, and 8. Band, in the large group rehearsal setting, includes music theory as well as fundamentals in music performance of a variety of musical styles. Small group instrumental lessons provide students with opportunities to learn the proper technique 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. Wind Ensemble is available to 8<sup>th</sup> graders who meet musical performance criteria.

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.

**Chorus** is offered to students who have an interest in performing vocal music. Choral classes are offered in each grade level and meet twice per six day cycle. Participation in chorus requires a commitment to two rehearsals beyond the school day and two evening concerts. In addition to preparing music for concerts, students are taught music reading fundamentals and correct vocal technique.

**Strings** are offered to students who have studied violin, viola, cello, or string base for a minimum of three years. String orchestra students will be scheduled for rotational lessons each marking period. The string orchestra will provide students with an ensemble experience working with composers of all stylistic periods, as well as instruction in music theory components. All members of the string orchestra will be responsible for two public performances, one competition, and several class projects per year.

## **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, along with cooperative learning, team building, problem-solving and positive peer interaction. Flexibility, strength, coordination, and cardio-vascular endurance are the ultimate goals of the total program.

The program for 6<sup>th</sup>, 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 the

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION** (continued)

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 Reading curriculum is designed to guide students toward becoming effective, proficient and independent readers. At the middle level the following courses are offered to provide instruction that best fits individual needs.

**Reading Foundations** is a strategy-based instructional program for students who are struggling with reading. Ongoing assessment enables teachers to provide appropriate instruction. Careful pacing combined with ample guided practice and sufficient review characterizes 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 the text foster the desired learning. This course is offered every day during the year for recommended 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students.

**Reading Comprehension** provides the opportunity for students to correct minor reading problems. Teachers work with students to identify their strengths and needs. Explicit instruction and teacher modeling of strategies combined with guided practice enables students to apply learned skills in a variety of reading situations. This course is offered two days per six-day cycle for the entire school year to 6th and 7th grade students through recommendations. Eighth grade students are recommended to meet for one marking period (45 days) while enrolled in the Exploratory World Language program.

**Strategic Reading** challenges students to achieve reading proficiency by expanding vocabulary and emphasizing strategies for content area materials. Students are introduced to the basic components of the research process. The focus of this course is to “read to learn” rather than “learn to read”. This course is offered two days per six-day cycle for the entire school year to 6th grade students.

## **READING** (continued)

**Explore Research** is designed to accompany Exploratory World Languages during the fourth quarter. Explore is designed to motivate and meet the needs of 8th grade readers. This course provides students with the opportunity to learn and apply reading and research skills needed for high school. Students develop critical reading skills, expand their vocabulary and engage in the various steps of the research process. This course is offered to 7th and 8th grade students enrolled in the Exploratory World Language course for one marking period (45 days).

## **SCIENCE**

**Sixth grade Science** focuses on Earth Science with an emphasis on Environmental Science. Topics include water, the atmosphere, weather, plate tectonics, rocks, minerals, erosion, wetlands and watersheds, and Pennsylvania mineralogy. Topics are learned through hands-on activities, field experiences, and multiple classroom learning opportunities.

**Seventh grade Science** focuses on Life Sciences with an emphasis on Ecology. Primary structures and functions of cells, tissues, organs, systems and organisms, adaptations of and interactions among organisms, and the relationships between living and non-living parts of an ecosystem are studied. Human impact on various systems, especially in context of management of those systems is included. Students learn topics through hands-on activities, field experiences, multi-media presentations, and classroom discussion.

**Eighth grade Science** is an introduction to the physical sciences: chemistry and physics. Topics include the nature and structure of matter, the structure and use of the Periodic Table of the Elements, types of chemical reactions and compounds, the gas laws, thermal energy, Newton’s laws of motion, simple machines, radiation, electricity, magnetism, the electromagnetic spectrum, and light. There is a focus on laboratory work and a portion of the final exam is laboratory based. Students make direct connections to everyday life.

## **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 topic studied.

## **SOCIAL STUDIES** (continued)

### **6<sup>th</sup> Grade: Geography Study -Canada, Mexico, Central and South America**

Students study the five themes of geography, history and present day culture of the countries listed. A variety of assessments are used.

### **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 living Constitution, the New Republic, and United States expansion across the North American continent. Assessments include tests, quizzes, projects, journals, and reports.

### **8<sup>th</sup> Grade: History of the United States (1850-1920)**

Units of study include the Civil War, changing America and global interaction. Assessment of learning takes a variety of formats and may include: projects, tests and quizzes. Essay writing is incorporated into the 8<sup>th</sup> grade Social Studies curriculum.

## **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 Language Arts/English and Mathematics. Students needing less support may be placed in ACES classes. ACES 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 curriculum 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. These programs provide direct instruction in subject areas. Autism support is provided at Downingtown and Lionville Middle Schools in a varied model.

## **TECHNOLOGY EDUCATION**

Technology Education is an activity-based curriculum that introduces students to technology by examining the basic systems of communications, manufacturing, construction, transportation, power and energy and biotechnology related fields of study. Students explore the evolution of Technology through the Technology Systems Model and the Technological Problem Solving Method.

The three classrooms are Communications and Biotechnology, Materials and Processes, and Energy, Power, and Transportation. In the Materials and Processes area, students create projects that incorporate learning about the most modern uses of resources, such as plastic, composites, metals and wood. Also as part of the Technology Education curriculum, students participate in units incorporating the following concepts: electronic publishing, robotics, applied systems, drafting and CAD, alternative energy sources, physics, lasers and fiber optics, engineering, biological related fields through problem solving, research and design.

Students in 6th, 7th and 8th grade meet for one (45 day) marking period each school year rotating through the three Technology Education labs over the three years in middle school.

## **WORLD LANGUAGES**

An **Exploratory** program provides students with an introduction to all three languages – French, German, and Spanish. This program actively engages students in cultural and linguistic experiences through a variety of activities. This program meets every day throughout the year for three marking periods. Students spend a marking period exploring each language, and during the fourth marking period students are enrolled in a quarterly elective (7<sup>th</sup> grade) or Explore Research/Reading Comprehension (8<sup>th</sup> grade).

**Level I and II:** The World Languages curriculum is designed to provide an opportunity for 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students to study one world language all year by selecting French, German, or Spanish. In the middle school, two levels of each world language are offered that focus on learning grammar, reading, writing, speaking and listening comprehension. The objectives of these courses are for students to understand and interpret spoken language, engage in conversation and communication, gain knowledge of different cultures, and connect with other disciplines. Both levels are year-long courses that meet every day and are considered to be a core course with expectations similar to the other core courses.

**WORLD LANGUAGES** (continued)

Successful students in Levels I and II World Language should have a motivation and commitment to learning a World Language, have a strong work ethic and study skills, be able to work independently, and be ready to study and work daily on language skill acquisition. Daily vocabulary study is necessary for success. The Level I and II courses at the middle level have the same curriculum as the high school courses.

**7<sup>th</sup> Grade Choices:** Exploratory, Level I

**8<sup>th</sup> Grade Choice:** Exploratory, Level I, Level II  
(Level II may be taken upon successful completion of Level I)

*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.*