

Middle School Course Guide

2021 - 2022



Swatara Middle School

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Introduction

The Swatara Middle School (SMS) community is extremely proud of our school, our staff, and especially our students. The time spent in the middle school can be full of trials and tribulations as children develop physically, socially, emotionally and intellectually. These times can be very dynamic while proving to be very stressful for many children, parents, and teachers. SMS faculty and staff are determined to meet these challenges because our students deserve the very best we have to offer. Children who are able to experience success in the middle school must first and foremost develop and hone their organization and preparation skills in order to manage the increased academic course load of the middle school curriculum.

This Middle School Course Guide has been compiled to explain the curricular offerings for students in grades 6, 7, and 8. Please take the time to read it and discuss the offerings and program requirements with your child. The years spent in the middle school are an opportunity for your child to develop a sense of ownership and independence over many aspects of his/her life. Take this opportunity to share your ideas and experiences while giving your child an opportunity to make some of the decisions to instill ownership in the decisions. With your support and direction along with the assistance of our professional staff, we will work collaboratively to provide your child with a rewarding educational experience encouraging the love of lifelong learning.

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8th Grade Course Selection Timeline

January – February

- Central Dauphin East High School holds a course selection information night for upcoming 9th graders and their parents.
- After this, SMS school counselors do classroom presentations with 8th grade students to discuss course selection options and distribute course selection sheets.
- Eighth grade course selection sheets are due in the guidance office with parent signatures. Specific due dates are given each year when the classroom presentations are made.

April – May

- Any changes to course selections should be addressed to your child's school counselor via a signed note indicating requested change(s).

May – July

- Master schedule developed by the school's administration.
- Course conflicts resolved.

August

- Schedules mailed to each student's home.
- Any changes to schedules should be addressed to your child's school counselor by phone or via a signed note indicating requested change(s).



Grading Scale

Grades are issued in accordance to the grading scale of Central Dauphin School District. Report cards are issued at the end of each 45-day marking period.

A: 90 – 100	Superior
B: 80 – 89	Above Average
C: 70 – 79	Average
D: 60 – 69	Below Average
F: 0 - 59	Failure

Distinguished Honors – No grade less than 90% in any major subject. No grade lower than 70% in any minor subject.

Honors – No grade less than 80% in any major subject. No grade lower than 70% in any minor subject.

* A major subject will be any course meeting a minimum of six times during the six day cycle.

Sixth Grade

Sixth grade students are welcomed to the middle school by a team of teachers. Students begin each day with their homeroom teacher where attendance and other matters are handled. All sixth grade students take the same core academic courses. In addition, each student participates in the Creative Arts Rotation program and has the option of taking up to three Music elective classes.

The following is a typical course load for a sixth grade student:

- Language Arts
- Mathematics
- Social Studies
- Science
- Creative Arts Rotation
- Physical Education
- Academic Enrichment and/or Music electives
- Metacognitive Skills

Language Arts

Sixth graders participate in an integrated language arts program including Reading, Spelling, English, and written expression. This is a continuation of the program used in the district's elementary schools.

Mathematics

Most sixth grade students will take *6th Grade Math*.

6th Grade Math includes instruction in the following content strands: the number system, ratios and proportional relationships, expressions and equations, geometry, and statistics and probability.

Pre-Algebra is a one-year course designed to prepare students for Algebra in seventh grade. The content focuses on signed numbers, operations with rational numbers and integers, solving equations and inequalities, ratios/percentages/ proportions, powers and roots, probability, an introduction to linear equations and basic geometric concepts.

Multiple data points will be analyzed for all students entering 6th grade in order to determine which course is most appropriate based on their mathematical needs. Data points such as Math and ELA projections and spring benchmark data will determine which students qualify to take a screener assessment. Students must score an 85% (or 80-84% with teacher recommendation) or higher on the screener assessment, which is based on 6th grade Math Standards, in order to determine if they qualify for Pre-Algebra.

The only allowable exceptions are as follows:

1. Student has successfully completed *6th Grade Math*, or
2. Student has a GIEP, IEP, or 504 plan which legally designates the course

Social Studies

Sixth grade social studies focus on U.S. Colonial Settlement, PA History, U.S. Government, U.S. Regions, and Governments of the World.

Science

Sixth Grade Science uses an integrated approach to science, with an emphasis on demonstrating the connections among concepts and disciplines that will be taught in future science classes. Concepts include; Nature and inquiry of science, forces and motion, matter and its interactions, cells and organisms, and Earth's structure and place in the universe.

Sixth Grade (continued)

Metacognitive Skills/Physical Education Sixth grade students alternate between Metacognitive Skills and Physical Education each day.

The Metacognitive Skills curriculum will teach students important skills to be successful in both school and life in general. The first part of the year will focus on Social Emotional Learning (SEL). Topics covered will be "Mindsets and Goals", "Recognizing Bullying and Harassment", "Thoughts, Emotions and Decisions", and "Managing Relationships and Conflict Resolution". The second half of the year will discuss and learn about Wellness, Diseases, Body Systems, and Nutrition.

In Physical Education students adhere to rigid routines, including changing into uniforms, using assigned lockers, and taking assessments of skills and knowledge. Emphasis is placed on active participation, positive interactions, sportsmanship, proficiency in sports skills and adherence to expected routines.

Seventh Grade

All seventh grade students take the same English, Science and World History courses. There are three options in Mathematics: 7th Grade Math, Pre-Algebra or Algebra 1. Every student participates in the Creative Arts Rotation program and has the option of taking up to three Music electives.

The following is a typical course load for a seventh grade student:

- English
- Mathematics
- World History
- Science
- Creative Arts Rotation
- Health
- Physical Education
- Academic Literacy
- Academic Enrichment and/or Music elective(s)

English

English in seventh grade includes a literature based curriculum that addresses the major genres of poetry, short story, drama, fables, and folktales. Reading skills, vocabulary development, and writing skills are stressed. Library research techniques are developed as students analyze a variety of topics.

Mathematics

Seventh grade students take one of three mathematics classes depending on their mathematical ability and previous course work. Multiple data points will be analyzed for all students entering 7th grade in order to determine which course is most appropriate based on their mathematical needs. Students that took *6th Grade Math* will take Pre-Algebra or 7th Grade Math. Those who successfully completed Pre-Algebra in Grade 6 will take Algebra 1 in Grade 7.

7th Grade Math:

This is a one year course that is designed around the 7th Grade PA Core Mathematics standards. Content includes concepts centered around ratios and proportional relationships, the number system, expressions and equations, geometry, and statistics and probability.

Pre-Algebra:

This is a one-year course designed to prepare students for Algebra in eighth grade. Content includes signed numbers, operations with rational numbers and integers, solving equations, ratios/proportions/ percentages, powers and roots, probability, an introduction to polynomials and basic geometric concepts.

Algebra I:

This one-year course continues with the concepts and skills introduced in Pre-Algebra. Linear expressions, equations and inequalities are explored. Graphing, probability and statistics, systems of equations and their applications, operations with polynomials, quadratic equations, factoring and the quadratic formula and rational expressions are included.

Academic Literacy

Academic Literacy teaches nonfiction comprehension skills and transfers these skills to other content areas. Emphasis is placed on recognizing and understanding patterns of organization, analyzing informational text that requires specific reading strategies, making connections across genres, organizing time and information efficiently, and understanding the connections of vocabulary to competent reading.

Seventh Grade (continued)

World History

Seventh grade World History traces the development of ancient civilizations and their influence on modern times. This course focuses on the development of cultures, the characteristics of civilizations, and their contributions in government, religion, science, and technology. They explore from the Ancient Greeks and Romans through the Renaissance and Reformation.

Geography is integrated into each of the units. The course is designed to give students an appreciation of the intercultural aspects of our global society.

Life Science

Seventh Grade Science concepts include: nature and inquiry of science, biochemistry, cell division and reproduction, genetics, the Earth over time, ecosystem interactions, and energy.

Health/Physical Education

Seventh grade students alternate between Health and Physical Education each day. The health curriculum covers all parts of the health triangle: physical, social and emotional. Students work on various life skills including decision-making, goal setting, conflict resolution, and refusal skills. Alcohol, tobacco, and drugs are included with both an understanding of each substance and how each impacts quality of life.

Physical Education provides opportunities for all students to develop psychomotor, social-emotional, and cognitive skills through a variety of physical activities. Lifetime personal fitness and wellness are a main focus through active participation.



Eighth Grade

Eighth grade students take the same English, Science, and US History classes. There are three options in Mathematics. The options in Math are based upon teacher recommendations, ability and past performance. Every student participates in the Creative Arts Rotation program and has the option of taking up to three Music electives.

The following is a typical course load for an eighth grade student:

- English
- Mathematics
- US History
- Science
- Creative Arts Rotation
- Health
- Physical Education
- Research and Communication Literacy
- Academic Enrichment and/or Music(s)

English

Eighth grade English is an opportunity to hone listening, reading, writing, and speaking skills. Students improve their vocabulary, reading and comprehension skill and write in a variety of formats including narrative, persuasive, informative, and comparison/contrast essays. Students are given opportunities to write creatively and advance their understanding of various types of writing, genres and poetic forms. Students are required to utilize proper grammar, mechanics and usage.

Research and Communication Literacy

This course focuses on preparing students to be successful researchers and communicators, building an understanding of digital citizenship and skills in reading and comprehending informational texts. Students use the information gained through the research of informational texts to compose and deliver informational and argumentative speeches and to participate in debates.

Mathematics

Eighth grade students take one of three Mathematics courses depending on their mathematical ability and previous course work. Multiple data points will be analyzed for all students entering 8th grade in order to determine which course is most appropriate based on their mathematical needs. Students who successfully completed 7th Grade Math will either take 8th Grade Math or Algebra I. Students who successfully completed Pre-Algebra in 7th Grade will take Algebra 1 in 8th grade. Students who successfully completed Algebra 1 in 7th grade will take Geometry in 8th grade. The 8th grade course will be based on multiple data points and teacher and principal recommendation.

8th Grade Math:

This is a one year course that is designed around the 8th Grade PA Core Mathematics standards. Content includes concepts centered around the number system, expressions and equations, functions, geometry, and statistics and probability.

Algebra I:

This one-year course continues with the concepts and skills introduced in Pre-Algebra. Linear expressions, equations and inequalities are explored. Graphing, probability and statistics, systems of equations and their applications, operations with polynomials, quadratic equations, factoring and the quadratic formula and rational expressions are included.

Geometry:

Students that successfully completed Algebra I in seventh grade take this one-year course which covers points, lines, planes, angles, connecting reasoning and proof, circles, applying trigonometry, investigating polygons/area/volume and understanding the hierarchy of quadrilaterals.

Eighth Grade (continued)

US History

Students are introduced to the first part of American history, beginning with the Exploration of North America, the Constitution, western expansion, the Civil War, and concluding with the Civil War Reconstruction. Students learn the contributions of various cultural and ethnic groups to the formation of our republic and national life. Through a variety of supplemental materials and activities, students demonstrate their understanding of key historical periods and their impact on the development of the nation's character. Emphasis is placed on the democratic process and advanced thinking skills. The content in this course will be continued in high school in US History II.

Earth Science

Eighth Grade Science concepts include: nature and inquiry of science, Earth's composition, earthquakes and volcanoes, Earth's water, weather factors, weather forecasting, Earth and human activity, the solar system, and deep space.

Health/Physical Education

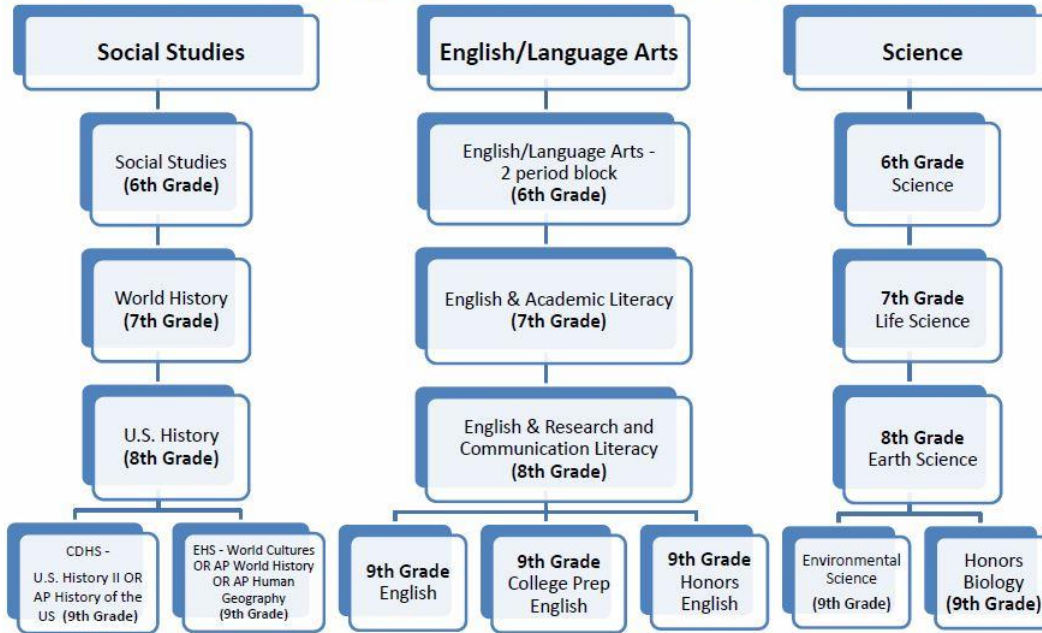
Eighth grade students alternate between Health and Physical Education each day. The health curriculum covers all parts of the health triangle: physical, social, and emotional. Students work on various life skills including decision-making and goal setting. Body systems, reproduction, and drugs are also studied during this year of health.

Physical Education provides students with an opportunity to develop an understanding of their physical fitness, social interactions and overall well-being. Students develop proficiency in individual skills which are applied in team and individual activities. Cooperation and good sportsmanship are emphasized along with individual responsibility for participation, dressing properly, and maintaining lockers. This course aids in transition to high school.

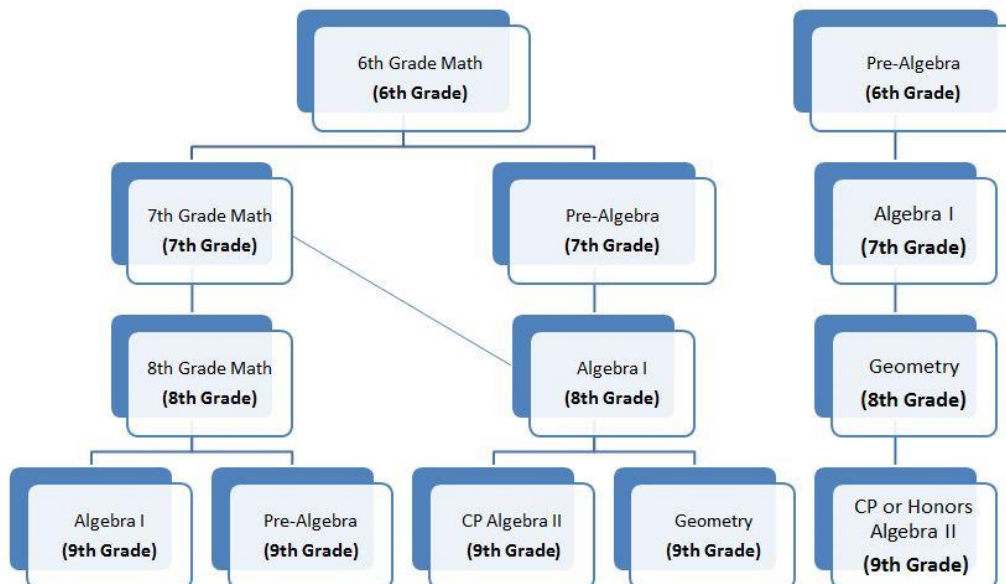
Core Academic Course Progression

The tables below show how students might progress through core academic courses from sixth to ninth grade. The tables do not show every option for course combinations nor do they show all of the elective courses at the high school level. Eighth grade students and their parents will receive additional information about ninth grade options at high school course selection meetings held in the spring.

**Central Dauphin School District
Middle School Social Studies, English/Language Arts, & Science Course Flowchart**



**Central Dauphin School District
Middle School Math Course Flowchart**



Creative Arts Rotation

Students in all grades rotate through five courses

Art

Sixth grade art stresses the understanding and comprehension of the elements and principles of art within the creation of student artwork, as well as the recognition of these ideas within the artwork of others. While student projects vary in the materials used and the techniques demonstrated, each finished product corresponds to those specific concepts or ideas. Students are given the opportunity to work with and explore an abundance of different mediums and techniques (i.e. watercolor painting, collage and drawing). In addition, various cultural influences within specific artists and art movements will be examined.



In the seventh grade art curriculum, students become critical analysts in developing their own feelings and emotions about their works of art, as well as art throughout history. Students continue to focus on both the elements and principles of design by developing artistic vocabulary and understanding of the key ideas and terms with which they are associated. Comprehension and understanding of each element and principle of art is demonstrated through different projects and techniques.

In eighth grade students reinforce concepts learned in seventh grade and focus on the importance of the following goals within the fine arts: art production, art history, art criticism and art aesthetics. Through the promotion of higher-level thinking, students continue to create works of art that identify the elements and principles of art by exploring both two- and three-dimensional art qualities. Students also learn how to critically analyze their own work and that of others.

Business Education

The main goal of the sixth grade Business course is to provide an opportunity for students to develop and improve preferred computer-keyboarding techniques (proper finger placement/reaches, posture, positioning, and hand-eye coordination) for efficient computer use. The focus for sixth grade students is mastering the alphabetic keyboard. The Micro Type 6 software and Microsoft Word are both used in a Windows environment.

The main goal of the seventh grade Business course is to help students develop and improve their use of the Microsoft computer applications including Microsoft Word and PowerPoint. Students will first become familiar with and then use Microsoft Word to create business letters, fliers, newsletters, tables, and reports. Students will also gain familiarity with Microsoft PowerPoint working with transitions, animations, and numerous effects to create professional presentations.

Math Solutions

As a means of support to our students as they learn and apply the mathematical standards, Swatara Middle School will offer a class focused entirely on making sure all students are prepared to meet proficiency in Mathematics. Our Math Intervention Specialist will have the opportunity to provide students with additional mathematics enrichment in the form of a marking period- long mathematics enrichment course. This course is in addition to your child's regular math course.

Music Education

The sixth grade program includes the study of basic musical elements, American musical styles like jazz, and its composers and musician. In addition the students will learn beginning piano and basic musical composition. Students gain musical knowledge through listening, singing and creating.

The seventh grade program stresses the elements of music: melody, rhythm, harmony and style through listening, singing and creating. Critical thinking, notation and analysis are used throughout the course, and creativity is encouraged through student composition. Students learn to begin to play the guitar and continue to play the piano. In addition, American musical theater is a unit of study in this grade.

The eighth grade curriculum guides the student through a history of musical styles and time periods. A voice unit involves vocal techniques and the study of opera. Students gain an understanding and appreciation of music through listening, creating, singing and acting. In addition, the students will learn guitar and piano notes, chords and composition.

Technology Education

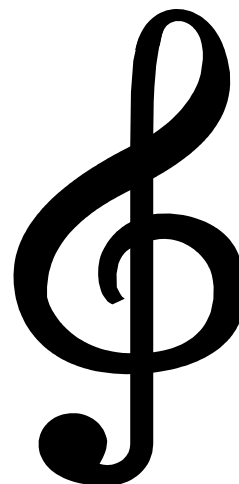
The technology education department at Central Dauphin Middle School realizes that technology is everywhere and its uses and problem solving capabilities increase exponentially each year. Technology is the application of tools, materials, processes, and systems used by humans to solve problems and satisfy our wants and needs. The study of technology requires students to design, create, use, evaluate and modify technological systems to solve problems. By solving these problems, students are given unique opportunities to apply numerous academic concepts through practical hands-on applications. Sixth grade students will strive to develop a general understanding of technology and apply basic measurement and manual drafting to design, create and test technology in common areas such as transportation.

In seventh grade, students will build on their current understanding of technology while introducing new concepts such as electronics, structures, and desktop publishing. These concepts will be a conduit to a more heightened appreciation of their own abilities. Students will work towards improving their skills in safety, measurement, while utilizing the problem solving model. Seventh graders will also be introduced to some basic Computer Aided Drafting to assist in increasing each student's ability to design technology.

Music Electives

Band, Orchestra, and Choir are available as graded elective courses at each grade level. Each performing group meets two days in a 6-day cycle. The electives are available during Academic Enrichment period. Students may choose one, two, or three of the music electives. Music electives build upon skills acquired during the introductory program in the elementary school. Students begin to learn to play instruments while in 4th grade and continue to build their skills through 5th grade in preparation for the secondary program. Any student who has not played an instrument in the past should contact the director to make arrangements to begin instruction. The ability to perform at band/orchestra/choir concerts will depend on personal ability and be determined on a case-by-case basis.

The band program is made up of wind and percussion instruments including: flute, oboe, clarinet, saxophone, trumpet, French horn, trombone, baritone, tuba, drums, and keyboard mallets. The orchestral program includes violins, violas, cellos and string basses. In addition to rehearsals, the band and orchestra program include lessons that meet once a cycle in small groups. These ensembles emphasize a comprehension of basic musicianship through learning the skill of playing a musical instrument. Technical skills, tone production, ensemble balance, and intonation are all emphasized during instruction.



In Choir, students are introduced to many styles of music, including music of different cultures and languages. Through rehearsing, students begin to develop critical listening skills, create two and three-part harmony, improve their personal skill as a musician and learn the importance of collaboration.

Academic Enrichment

Academic Enrichment occurs once daily for each grade level. This period allows a student to select one of three music electives to be added to their schedule. In addition, at the discretion of the building administration, educational initiatives may be developed in an effort to address a variety of educational needs. These initiatives should not be considered optional if determined by the building principal. The building principal will determine whether participation in any such program will be required after considering a variety of criteria i.e. assessment scores, current grades, student/parent/teacher recommendations.

Gifted Program

Students who are evaluated and identified as mentally gifted in accordance with Pennsylvania Chapter 16 Regulations may require instruction and support that is matched to their unique abilities.

In the middle school, learning opportunities for Gifted Students are determined on an individual basis consistent with each student's Gifted Individualized Education Plan (GIEP). Students may be provided with the opportunity to work with similar-ability peers in a small-group setting during enrichment classes. Additionally, Gifted Students may have the opportunity to participate in academic competitions, clubs, and independent studies. Gifted programming is designed to further develop communication, collaboration, leadership, and higher order thinking skills through a variety of activities. Gifted teachers will work collaboratively with regular classroom teachers to provide enrichment or acceleration to ensure each student can benefit meaningfully from the gifted program.

Special Education Programs

Learning Support

The Learning Support Program supports students with learning disabilities that require specially designed instruction to access the curriculum. Learning support services are provided in all schools within the district. In addition to supporting students to perform tasks within the regular education curriculum, specialized instructions in the areas of reading and mathematics are often utilized. This instruction may be presented in a small group setting and at a slower pace than the regular education courses. An active IEP is required.

Learning Support services are provided in a continuum level of support. Programs include:

- Itinerant Learning Support - programming is available for students that require a minimal level of instruction or intervention to meet their individual needs; services are available in all schools within the district; services are provided within the regular education and/or Learning Support classrooms with the majority of the day spent with grade level peers; supplemental aids and services are provided to the students to improve functioning in regular education classes; additional support including assistance in the regular education classes or modification of classroom materials may be provided; services provided by a team of professionals including the School Psychologist, Behavior Specialist, Special Education Case Manager, and General Education Teacher(s).
- Supplemental Learning Support – programming is available for students in need of a moderate level of services to meet their individual needs; services available in all schools within the district; services for reading and math instruction most likely provided in a Learning Support classroom; instruction may be presented in a small group setting and a slower pace than the regular education courses; additional support including assistance in the regular education classes or modification of classroom materials may be provided; services provided by a team of professionals including the School Psychologist, Behavior Specialist, Special Education Case Manager, and General Education Teacher(s).

Emotional Support

The Emotional Support Program supports students with emotional disabilities that impact their learning and/or the learning of others. These students may receive specially designed instruction. Students will be taught, through direct instruction, the basic skills of communication and interacting with peers and adults in a socially acceptable manner. Strategies for stress and anger management are provided and incorporated into the instructional day.

Emotional support services are provided in a continuum level of support. Programs include:

- Consultative/Itinerant Emotional Support – programming is available for students that require a minimal level of intervention to meet their individual needs; services are provided in all school within the district; services provided by a team of professionals including the School Psychologist, Itinerant Emotional Support Counselor, Special Education Case Manager, General Education Teacher(s), and District Social Worker.
- Supplemental Emotional Support – programming is available for students in need of a moderate level of services to meet their individual needs; IEP team determines, on a case by case basis, if the service can be provided in the student’s home school; services provided by a team of professionals including the School Psychologist, Itinerant Emotional Support Counselor, Special Education Case Manager, General Education Teacher(s), and District Social Worker.
- Full-time Emotional Support – programming is available for students who are in need of an intensive level of service to meet their individual needs; services are provided at Linglestown Middle School and Swatara Middle School; instruction is delivered by a full-time Emotional Support Teacher and therapeutic support is provided by a Mental Health Therapist assigned to the program; additional services provided by a team of professionals including the School Psychologist, Behavioral Specialist, School Counselor, General Education Teacher(s), and District Social Worker.

Related Services

Related services are offered as part of the IEP. Those services which are provided must be determined by the IEP team. Services include, but are not limited to, Speech/Language Support, Occupational Therapy Support, Physical Therapy Support, and Counseling Support.

Time Schedules

Each grade level follows a slightly different schedule during the day to accommodate three different lunch periods (noted with an "L"). Class periods are 44 minutes in length with the exception of a 30 minute lunch period. Academic Enrichment (AE) is 45 minutes in length.

6th Grade

Homeroom	7:40 – 7:45
Period 1	7:48 – 8:33
Block A	8:36 – 9:50
Block B	9:52 – 11:06
Block C	11:08 – 12:22
Period 7 (L)	12:26 – 12:56
Period 8	12:59 – 1:42
Period 9	1:45 – 2:30

7th Grade

Homeroom	7:40 – 7:45
Period 1	7:48– 8:33
Period 2	8:36– 9:19
Period 3	9:22 10:05
Period 4	10:08– 10:51
Period 5 (L)	10:54 – 11:24
Period 6	11:27 12:10
Period 7	12:13 12:56
Period 8	12:59 – 1:42
Period 9	1:45 – 2:30

8th Grade

Homeroom	7:40 – 7:45
Period 1	7:48– 8:33
Period 2	8:36– 9:19
Period 3	9:22 -10:05
Period 4	10:08 – 10:51
Period 5	10:54 – 11:37
Period 6 (L)	11:40 – 12:10
Period 7	12:13 – 12:56
Period 8	12:59 – 1:42
Period 9	1:45 – 2:30

