



Shaler Area Middle School



Program of Studies 2026 - 2027

Shaler Area School District
General Information

District Mission

Shaler Area School District is a collaborative, innovative, and creative learning environment for all.

District Vision

To serve our Shaler Area community and its children by providing an education that fosters our youth to be contributing members of society.

To develop resiliency, empathy, creative thinking, critical thinking, and problem solving in every student on their path to fulfilling their potential.

District Core Values

We value the celebration and promotion of excellence in our community.

We value a culture where everyone has a voice and everyone is an owner.

We value and encourage creative and innovative risk-taking.

We value our responsibility to serve and educate our community.

We value an atmosphere of trust, transparency, and collaboration.



Administration and Contact Information

Shaler Area Middle School

1810 Mt. Royal Blvd, Glenshaw, PA 15116

www.shalerarea.org

Administration

Principal

Dr. Shannon Howard
howards@shalerarea.org
 412-492-1200 x8-2501

Assistant Principal

Mr. Mitch Shaw
shawm@shalerarea.org
 412-492-1200 x8-2501

Dean of Students

Mr. Christopher Catanese
catanese@shalerarea.org
 412-492-1200 x8-2223

Important Phone Numbers & Contact Information

Middle School Phone Numbers			
Shaler Area School District			412-492-1200
			dial 8, and then the extension
Main Office	Ms. Karly Siatkosky, Secretary	siatkoskyk@shalerarea.org	x2501
Main Office	Ms Becky Coyne, Secretary	crilleyj@shalerarea.org	x2500
School Counseling Office	Mrs. Paula Dobson, Secretary	dobsonp@shalerarea.org	x2520
Attendance Line			x2525
School Counselor *	Ms. Liz Wolff	wolffe@shalerarea.org	x2521
School Counselor *	Ms. Kristi Coleman	colemank@shalerarea.org	x2522
Social Worker	Mrs. Kathy Newport	newportk@shalerarea.org	x2523
School Nurse	Mrs. Nicole Monahan	monahann@shalerarea.org	x2510 or x2511
Activities Director	Ms. Lori Robinet-Mish	mishl@shalerarea.org	x2530
Assistant Activities Director	Ms. Liz Wolff	wolffe@shalerarea.org	x2530
Middle School Fax			412-492-1237

* *NOTE:* The School Counselors remain with the students for both 7th and 8th grades while at SAMS:

- Ms. Coleman will be with the class of 2032 (7th grade for 2026-2027)
- Ms. Wolff will be with the class of 2031 (8th grade for 2026-2027)

Letter from the Principal

Dear Shaler Area Middle School Students and Families,

Welcome to Shaler Area Middle School! We are thrilled to present to you the 2026-2027 Middle School Program of Studies.

Middle school is an incredibly dynamic period in a child's life. It's a time of significant growth - physically, socially, emotionally, and intellectually. As students embark on this journey, they will encounter new ideas, forge new friendships, and explore their evolving sense of self. To support our students through these transformative years and to prepare them for an ever-evolving world, Shaler Area Middle School consistently updates and refines our curriculum and academic offerings.

This Program of Studies serves as a comprehensive guide to the courses available during the upcoming school year. Our 7th and 8th-grade courses are carefully designed to encourage exploration. Core subjects such as English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies are complemented by a range of elective courses spanning the Arts, Music, Computers, Family and Consumer Science, Technology Education, Careers, and Physical Education. Our aim is to provide opportunities for students to discover their passions, develop their talents, and equip themselves for the challenges they will face in high school and beyond.

We encourage you to take the time to review the Program of Studies thoroughly. We recommend that families sit down together to discuss course prerequisites and the course selection process. The Course Selection Worksheet included in this document is designed to facilitate this discussion and aid in making informed choices.

Should you have any questions or concerns during the scheduling process, please do not hesitate to reach out to your child's teacher, team leader, school counselor, or to me.

Warm regards,

Dr. Shannon Howard
Principal

GENERAL INFORMATION

Career Readiness Indicators

All Pennsylvania schools are accountable for ensuring every student has access to opportunities to assess interests, build skills, and identify and explore careers aligned to those interests and skills, in order to successfully prepare for and persist in our workforce. Throughout a student's middle school years, he/she will participate in several opportunities consisting of activities and lessons aligned to PA Career Education and Work (CEW) standards, as well as the completion of Industry Based Learning Indicators.

Grading Scale

Earned Percentage	Letter Grade
97.50 - 100	A+
91.50 - 97.49	A
89.50 - 91.49	A-
87.50 - 89.49	B+
81.50 - 87.49	B
79.50 - 81.49	B-
77.50 - 79.49	C+
71.50 - 77.49	C
69.50 - 71.49	C-
59.50 - 69.49	D
0 - 59.49	F

Keystone Exams

The Keystone Exams are an end-of-course assessment and are required for Pennsylvania Public School students. The Algebra 1 Keystone exam is taken in May of the year the student has the Algebra 1 math course scheduled. The other Keystone exams (English and Biology) are taken while in high school.

Middle School students enrolled in Algebra 1 need to score proficient or advanced on the end-of-course Keystone Exam *and* earn an 82% or better in 7th grade Algebra 1 as a scheduling prerequisite for Geometry.

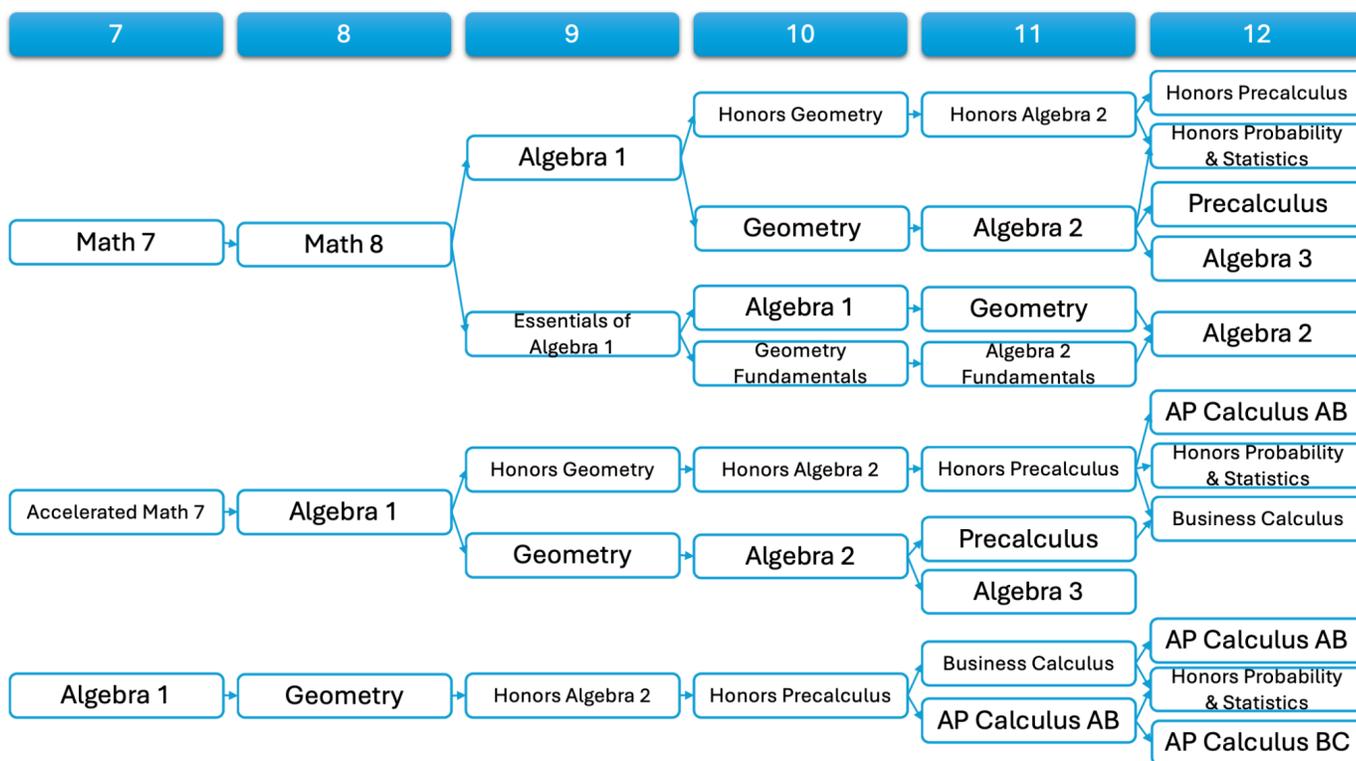
In addition, all students must demonstrate proficiency on the Keystone exam, or they will be required to retake the test and may also be required to retake Algebra 1.

Math Placement & Course Sequence

Shaler Area Middle School takes great care in ensuring that students are placed into courses that will best meet their individual skills and abilities. As students progress through their study of mathematics, some students acquire math concepts and processes more quickly than others. Some students can be well served by accelerating their study of mathematics, allowing them to engage with more complex concepts while other students benefit from a traditional amount of time and instruction. The guidelines are set for the purpose of placing students in the academic course with the appropriate level of individual academic rigor, as well as to ensure that students have the basic skills needed to be successful in all future coursework. A data team reviews multiple data points to arrive at a decision for course placement, including student's grade averages,

standardized assessments and entrance test results. These data points reflect a strong academic foundation that is predictive of student success in advanced coursework. Decisions will be made beginning in the 4th quarter. Students will only be notified of the final placement decision when they receive the 2025-2026 student schedule in August.

Below shows some potential math pathways for students:



Middle School Team Approach

Teaming is at the heart of middle school. Both students and teachers benefit from a team approach to teaching and learning. Both the students and the teachers are grouped into these teams, which are smaller communities to help support students to build relationships during the middle school experience. Team teachers meet to collaborate and discuss instruction, plan activities, and meet with parents. Students from all of the elementary schools are randomly assigned to a team.

The team approach consists of students having similar schedules in terms of English, mathematics, science, and social studies classes. Depending on course demands, some classes may be taught off-team. Students are notified of team placement and schedule in mid-August.

Seventh grade students will be placed on one of three 7th grade teams, each of which consists of 4 teachers. Eighth grade students will be placed on one of two 8th grade teams, each of which consists of 6 teachers.

Students in both grades will have an opportunity to be with other classmates in their grade who are not on their same team during lunch, and possibly during an elective. As eighth graders, students have the opportunity to select electives. This approach will help prepare our students for high school coursework as well as to explore interests.

Promotion Requirements

Each student is to perform school work related to their individual ability and achievement expectancies. Performance is based on evaluation of assignments, participation, and tests in the classroom. Attendance, attitude, and behavior are additional personal indicators which affect classroom performance. Performance on grade-level PSSAs may impact future scheduling requests.

Grade Requirement: Promotion requires passing three or more core academic subjects (ELA, math, science and social studies). Students who fail two or three core academic subjects during the school year, must successfully complete the required course(s) in summer school.

Attendance Requirement: If a middle school student's excused and/or unexcused absences total more than twelve (12) for a semester or twenty (20) for a full year on the last day of the semester or year, the student may not be granted credit toward promotion (School Board Policy 204).

Schedule Change and Requests

1. No schedule changes will be granted based on teacher, team, or time preference.
2. Once the semester has begun, only those requests deemed to be crucial and essential will be approved.
3. Elective swapping is not permitted after the first 10 days of the school year.
4. Schedule change requests must be initiated through the counseling offices and will only be approved by the Principal or Assistant Principal.
5. No schedule change is guaranteed.

Typical Student Day

Below is a typical schedule. Please keep in mind that this is only a sample schedule.

7th Grade		Period	8th Grade	
Homeroom		HR	Homeroom	
Math What I Need (WIN) Period		1	Days 1-3-5 Elective	Days 2-4-6 Elective
Days 1-3-5 Foundations	Days 2-4-6 World Language Exploratory	2	Physical Science 8	
Science 7		3	World Language 1 or ELA What I Need (WIN) Period	
Math 7		4	Days 1-3-5 Phys Ed 8	Days 2-4-6 Elective
7th Grade Lunch		5	Math What I Need (WIN) Period	
ELA What I Need (WIN) Period		6	8th Grade Lunch	
Days 1-3-5 Phys Ed 7	Days 2-4-6 Music	7	ELA 8	
Ancient Empires 7		8	8th Grade Quarterly Rotation Career Readiness - FACS - Tech - Health	
ELA 7		9	American Cultures 8	
7th Grade Quarterly Rotation STEM - Art - Computers - FACS		10	Math 8	

7th Grade Course Selection Worksheet

Student Name: _____

Core Courses			Required
7010	English Language Arts 7	1 period	7010
7030	Science 7	1 period	7030
7040	Ancient Empires 7	1 period	7040
Math Course - Student placement will be determined by data team			Required
7020 7022 7021	Math 7 Accelerated Math 7 Algebra 1- 7	1 period	WILL BE DETERMINED BY PLACEMENT TEAM
7th Grade Courses			Required
7650 7660 7670 7680	STEM 7 Art 7 Computers 7 FACS 7	1 period (7th Grade Exploratory Arts courses rotate 1 per quarter)	7650 7660 7670 7680
7700	Physical Education 7	½ period (meets all year, every other day)	7700
7500	Foundations	½ period (meets all year, every other day)	7500
7460	World Language Exploratory	½ period (meets all year, every other day)	7460
Intervention and Support - Student placement will be determined by data team			Required
7011	ELA What I Need (WIN)	1 period	7011
7021	Math What I Need (WIN)	1 period	7021
Elective			Select <u>One</u> Music
7800 7801 7802 7803	Exploring Music Chorus 7 Band 7 Orchestra 7	½ period (meets all year, every other day)	<p>_____</p> <p>Do you play an instrument? yes/no</p> <p>If so, what? _____</p>

Please note the following before making choices for 7th Grade courses:

All Students – Course placement for Math and interventions will be determined by a placement team after reviewing student data.

Students who receive Special Education, Gifted, ESL, Bridge services - Your course selection will be determined on an individual basis, and will follow the student's IEP or GIEP.

8th Grade Course Selection Worksheet

Student Name: _____

Core Courses			Required
8010	English Language Arts 8	1 period	<i>8010</i>
8030	Physical Science 8	1 period	<i>8030</i>
8040	American Cultures 8	1 period	<i>8040</i>
Math Course - Student placement will be determined by data team			Required
8020 8022 8023	Math 8 Algebra 1- 8 Geometry 8	1 period	WILL BE DETERMINED BY PLACEMENT TEAM *UNTIL THEN, MATH 8 WILL APPEAR
8th Grade Courses			Required
8670 8680 8690 8701	Career Readiness 8 FACS 8 Tech 8 Health 8	1 period (8th Grade Exploratory Arts courses rotate 1 per quarter)	<i>8670</i> <i>8680</i> <i>8690</i> <i>8701</i>
8700	Physical Education 8	½ period (meets all year, every other day)	<i>8700</i>
Intervention and Support - Student placement will be determined by data team			Required
8011	ELA What I Need (WIN) OR World Language level 1 (select below)	1 period*	<i>8011</i> <i>OR WORLD LANGUAGE</i>
8021	Math What I Need (WIN)	1 period	<i>8021</i>
8th Grade Electives			Select THREE and TWO alternatives
8801 8802 8803 8804 8805 8806 8807 8808 8809 8810 8861 8862 8820 8830 8840	Chorus 8 Band 8 Orchestra 8 Jazz Ensemble 8 Percussion 8 Instrumental Exploration 8 Kids & You 8 3-D Art 8 Graphic Design / Yearbook 8 eSports 8 Creative Art 8 Drawing & Painting 8 Recreational Games 8 Podcasting / Media Literacy 8 Introduction to Theatre Arts 8	½ period (meets all year, every other day)	<p>THREE ELECTIVE CHOICES:</p> <p>1. _____</p> <p>2. _____</p> <p>3. _____</p> <p>TWO Alternatives:</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Do you play an instrument? yes/no If so, what? _____</p>
8460 8470 8480 8490	French 1 Japanese 1 Latin 1 Spanish 1	*1 period <u>in place of ELA WIN</u> - Must meet ALL placement criteria	<p><i>Students who qualify for World Language will rank, but are not guaranteed first choice.</i></p> <p>#1 _____</p> <p>#2 _____</p>

Please note the following before making choices for 8th Grade courses:

All Students – Course placement for Math, World Language and interventions will be determined by a placement team after reviewing student data.

Students who receive Special Education, Gifted, ESL, Bridge services - Your course selection will be determined on an individual basis, and will follow the student's IEP or GIEP.

Course Requests Procedures - Rising 8th

Parents and students will have the opportunity to complete the course request process online by accessing Infinite Campus from any computer with Internet access.

The course request window availability will be shared on the Shaler Area Middle School website and through the announcements.

Students who do not complete course requests during this window will be assigned a scheduling appointment through the school counseling office, and may have limited scheduling options.

Requesting Courses

Students should have their "Course Selection Worksheet" completed and available when entering the Student Course Request.

Students will be pre-placed in all core classes. Students will be placed into a math course with math placement pending data review. This may not be the student's final placement; Students will only be notified of the final placement decision when they receive the final 2026-2027 student schedule in August.

Students must pick the required number of elective courses and alternatives to fill the schedule.

Entering Course Requests on Infinite Campus

Course Registration allows students to select which courses they would like to take. This is just a course request process; *it does not guarantee placement into a course.*

Directions for entering the course requests will be provided when the school counselor meets with the class.

Course Requests Procedures - Rising 7th

Parents and students will complete the course request process through a Google Form.

The course request window availability will be shared on the Shaler Area Middle School website and through the announcements.

GRADE 7

REQUIRED COURSES: 7th grade students will take each of the following courses

7010	English Language Arts 7	Grade 7	Full Year	Every Day
	English Language Arts 7 will include a study of short stories, poetry, and nonfiction selections to introduce students to the analysis of literature. Students will read novels throughout the year including <i>The Outsiders</i> and <i>The Lions of Little Rock</i> . This course is designed with a strong emphasis on building skills in grammar, vocabulary, speaking, listening, writing, and reading. Through the study of English grammar, students are taught to develop thoughts logically in order to write and speak clearly. Students will read and write using a variety of print and technological sources and resources. The writing curriculum consists of a variety of creative and expressive formal and informal writing assignments. In addition, the course reinforces the skills identified in the Pennsylvania Common Core Standards for English Language Arts, preparing the students to achieve Proficient to Advanced performance scores on the 7th grade PSSA ELA assessment.			
7030	Science 7	Grade 7	Full Year	Every Day
	The Science 7 course begins by reviewing the basic nature of science and moves into the characteristics of living things. Students will discover the structures and inner workings of cells and underlying nature of genetics that directs an organism's characteristics. The year ends with an exploration of Ecology and the Environment. The focus of seventh grade science is the discipline of Life Science, with elements of Physical Science and Earth Science incorporated. The development of higher-level thinking skills; analysis, synthesis, and interpretations of data is a major goal, with a focus on the use of vocabulary and problem-solving skills. The course will promote a deeper understanding of scientific concepts that are part of the Pennsylvania Science, Technology & Engineering, and Environmental Literacy & Sustainability Academic Standards (STEELS)			
7040	Ancient Empires 7	Grade 7	Full Year	Every Day
	Ancient Empires 7 is a survey of world history from the time frame of the Roman Empire until Late Middle Ages. Students will learn about socioeconomics, political, and ideological conditions of various time periods as they study historical events and cultural achievements of world regions. Students will analyze the five fundamental themes of geography, while exploring each region of the world. Students will utilize critical thinking and problem-solving skills while participating in interactive discussions and establishing real world connections.			
7020	Math 7 *	Grade 7	Full Year	Every Day
	The Math 7 course is designed around the standards set forth by the State of Pennsylvania. This course will closely resemble a traditional "Pre-Algebra" course. Students will begin with a study of rational numbers which they will apply to a unit on basic Algebra skills, including simplifying/evaluating expressions and solving equations. Students will expand on previous knowledge of ratios and proportions and explore graphing proportional relationships on a coordinate grid. Other units will include probability, statistics, and geometry. * Students will be placed into the appropriate level of mathematics by a placement team, based on a scoring rubric as described on pages 4-5.			
7022	Accelerated Math 7 *	Grade 7	Full Year	Every Day
	The Accelerated Math 7 course is designed to prepare students for completing Algebra 1 in 8th grade. The Accelerated Math 7 course will cover all the same material that is covered in Math 7 as well as some additional			

material that is covered in the Math 8 course. Additional units include a study of irrational numbers, exploring exponents and working with geometric transformations.

*** Students will be placed into the appropriate level of mathematics by a placement team, based on a scoring rubric** as described on pages 4-5.

7021	Algebra 1- 7 *	Grade 7	Full Year	Every Day
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The Algebra 1 7 course is aligned to the Pennsylvania Common Core Standards to prepare students for the Keystone Exam. This course is designed to study the structure of the real number system and the application of the properties of real numbers in problem solving. Included in this study will be a review of the basic operations with directed numbers. Methods are developed for the solution of linear and quadratic equations and inequalities. These methods are then applied to the solution of various types of statement problems. The course introduces polynomials, functions, and graphing. Techniques for solving linear equations in two variables are also studied. Additional material may be added as needed to help bridge the gap from 6th grade to Algebra 1. *A calculator is strongly recommended* to be successful in the course and will be needed for state testing. The school recommends a Texas Instruments TI-30X IIS Scientific Calculator.

Algebra 1 has been aligned to the Pennsylvania State Standards and the Algebra 1 Keystone Assessment. Successful completion of the Algebra 1 Keystone Exam is a graduation requirement and can determine future scheduling and math placement.

Students will take both the PSSA-Math as well as the Keystone Exam for Algebra.

*** Students will be placed into the appropriate level of mathematics by a placement team, based on a scoring rubric** as described on pages 4-5.

Exploratory Arts Rotation - Students will take each of the following courses - one per 9-weeks:

7650	STEM 7	Grade 7	Full Year	Every Day
7660	Art 7			
7670	Computers 7			
7680	FACS 7			

- **STEM 7** is designed to advance instruction and learning in the areas of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics. Students will be encouraged to apply knowledge of community business, industry and related fields of study. This course will combine students' critical thinking skills and innovation to prepare them for meeting the current demands of the employment trends.
- **Art 7** will provide the students with the opportunity to build upon skills and content knowledge in exploration of the Visual Arts. Students will have the opportunity to produce works of art in a variety of media with an emphasis in the area of creative inquiry and individual exploration. Lessons will integrate concepts of historical and cultural contexts as well as art criticism and aesthetics. This challenging and rewarding course is intended to prepare students for continuing Visual Arts in 8th grade.
- After successfully completing nine weeks of **Computers 7**, the student should be able to create and enhance word processing documents using Microsoft Word. You will prepare letters, bulletins, outlines, reports, and newsletters. Creating and enhancing worksheets and charts using Microsoft Excel. Using Microsoft PowerPoint, you will be able to enhance presentation slides by formatting text and objects and inserting charts, tables, and spreadsheets. Also learn how to manipulate the slide show by applying animation and transitions to the presentation. We will also touch on Internet safety and cyber security. One last topic covered in this class is how to properly use the Internet as a research tool.
- Four lifelong, practical skills will be explored through the **FACS 7** course: Childcare, Consumer Skills, Sewing, Foods and Nutrition. Childcare will highlight the responsibilities and techniques of a good babysitter, concentrating on safety, handling emergencies and caring for children of different age levels. The sewing unit will incorporate hand and machine sewing skills that will result in the completion of a Patchwork Pillow. Foods will include information on nutrition, portion control and food labels. Students will practice basic cooking skills with an emphasis on measuring techniques and

safety. Consumerism will focus on shopping skills, budget and advertising as they pertain to meal planning and food choices.

7700	Physical Education 7	Grade 7	Full Year	Every Other Day
<p>This course is designed to promote and enhance the individual student’s overall fitness through a variety of exercises and activities. Assessment in this course will be evaluated not only through consistent daily participation, but through written work, projects, and skill acquisition. The goal of this program is to create a comfortable environment enabling each student to realize her/his greatest physical potential, which in turn will allow each student to realize her/his fullest academic potential. Students are expected to improve physical fitness levels regularly and will be responsible for setting goals and monitoring their own fitness improvements. Students will track mandatory fitness tests, which include but are not limited to: the mile run, sit-ups, push-ups and the PACER test. Additionally, students will have the opportunity to participate in team and individual sports which will emphasize strategy, problem-solving, cooperative learning, leadership and positive sportsmanship. Units will include but are not limited to: Aerobics, Badminton, Basketball, Cardio Training, Climbing, Disc Golf, Football, Garbage Ball, Handball, High Intensity Training, Hockey, Lacrosse, Orienteering, Pilates, Snowshoeing, Soccer, Speedball, Track and Field, Ultimate Football, Volleyball, Weight Training, and Yoga.</p>				

7500	Foundations 7	Grade 7	Full Year	Every Other Day
<p>Foundations is a course to prepare children as they transition to middle school. Students will learn study skills, organization, time management and the necessary requisites to be a successful student. Students will learn about the climate of the middle school and their role in a positive atmosphere through character education lessons. Students will have lessons with the school librarian, learning how to find and utilize quality information. The goal of this course is to not only prepare our children for the transition to middle school, but high school, college, career and beyond.</p>				

7500	World Language Exploratory 7	Grade 7	Full Year	Every Other Day
<p>Students will explore the four world languages offered at Shaler Area Middle School: French, Japanese, Latin, and Spanish. This exploratory rotation will provide students with a foundation of introductory vocabulary in each world language. In addition, students will delve into the geography, cultural traditions, borrowed words from each language, and foods of the countries where these languages are spoken. By learning about the places where French, Japanese, Latin, and Spanish are used, students will broaden their global perspective. This course offers a fun, dynamic way to start exploring the world through language, preparing students for future language studies and fostering a greater appreciation for cultural diversity.</p>				

INTERVENTION & SUPPORT: Student placement will be determined by data team

7011	ELA WIN 7	Grade 7	Full Year	Every Day
<p>The “What I Need” (WIN) period allows all students to receive data-based, targeted and skills-based remediation or enrichment in English Language Arts. Students’ skills are assessed using multiple measures and monitored over time to assess their skills and needs. The WIN period is part of Shaler Area Middle School’s Multi-Tiered System of Supports.</p>				

7021	Math WIN 7	Grade 7	Full Year	Every Day
The “What I Need” (WIN) period allows all students to receive data-based, targeted and skills-based remediation or enrichment in mathematics. Students’ skills are assessed using multiple measures and monitored over time to assess their skills and needs. The WIN period is part of Shaler Area Middle School’s Multi-Tiered System of Supports.				

ELECTIVES: All 7th grade students must choose ONE music class

7800	Exploring Music 7	Grade 7	Full Year	Every Other Day
This class introduces musical concepts. Students will explore the basic techniques of singing and playing instruments in a positive learning atmosphere. This class also includes music history, and basic music theory. Every student will be given the opportunity to experience music and all it has to offer in a positive learning atmosphere. Students are graded for positive participation daily and on assigned work and class performance evaluations.				

7801	Chorus 7	Grade 7	Full Year	Every Other Day
Seventh grade chorus is a yearlong, fully graded course geared to students who desire to learn and practice healthy singing techniques. Students will study and perform different genres and styles of music. They will also study music theory, and sight-reading. All students will be required to sing in both large and small groups and may be asked to sing solos at the discretion of the director. Harmony and part-singing will be emphasized. Instruction will include the understanding of stage presence and concert etiquette. All students will participate in at least two concerts throughout the year.				

7802	Band 7	Grade 7	Full Year	Every Other Day
Seventh grade band offers students the opportunity to participate in an instrumental musical ensemble that explores various musical styles. This band will meet every other day. There will be at least three required performances throughout the year.				
<i>Prerequisite:</i>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 6th grade band or at least one year of experience on the instrument. ● Percussionists must be proficient on both snare and mallets and will still need a bell kit. ● An instrument is required for participation in Band. If you are playing a larger instrument provided by the school, a nominal fee will be charged for maintenance and rental of the instrument. 				

7803	Orchestra 7	Grade 7	Full Year	Every Other Day
Seventh grade String Orchestra gives students the opportunity to participate in an instrumental ensemble that will explore various musical styles. This group will meet every other day. There will be at least three required performances throughout the year.				
<i>Prerequisite:</i>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 6th grade strings or at least one year of experience on the instrument. ● An instrument is required for participation in Orchestra. 				

GRADE 8

REQUIRED COURSES: 8th grade students will take each of the following courses

8010	English Language Arts 8	Grade 8	Full Year	Every Day
	<p>The purpose of this course is to prepare students to meet the expectations they will face in continuing their secondary education. ELA 8 continues to refine student literacy skills in reading, writing, speaking, and listening. The ELA curriculum uses a variety of fiction, including <i>To Kill a Mockingbird</i> and <i>Ender's Game</i>, and non-fiction texts to develop critical thinking and various forms of written expression. Special focus is on literary and text-dependent analysis. Effective use of technology will support and extend appropriate parts of the curriculum. In addition, the course reinforces the skills identified in the Pennsylvania Common Core Standards for English Language Arts, preparing the students to achieve Proficient to Advanced performance scores on the 8th grade PSSA ELA assessment.</p>			
8030	Physical Science 8	Grade 8	Full Year	Every Day
	<p>Students in Physical Science 8 will develop an understanding of four core ideas: structure and properties of matter, chemical reactions, forces and interactions, and energy. The performance expectations in this course blend those core ideas with scientific and engineering practices including models, planning and conducting investigations, analyzing and interpreting data, mathematical thinking, design and evaluation, and constructing explanations. Students will use these practices to demonstrate their understanding of the core ideas. The course will promote a deeper understanding of scientific concepts that are part of the Pennsylvania Science, Technology & Engineering, and Environmental Literacy & Sustainability Academic Standards (STEELS)</p>			
8040	American Cultures 8	Grade 8	Full Year	Every Day
	<p>American History 8 introduces students to the first part of a 2-year historical and cultural study of the United States of America. The students study the chronological history of the United States from the Revolutionary War through 1900. The course focuses on the growth of our political, economic, social, and technological development and how those influences affected American History. The use of primary sources enhances the students' understanding of complex ideas such as the development of our national identity from a diverse population to an American Democracy. Geography concepts are related to the course content. Throughout the year, classroom activities and unit projects are designed to strengthen reading, writing, and oral expression skills.</p>			
8020	Math 8 *	Grade 8	Full Year	Every Day
	<p>The Math 8 course is designed around the standards set forth by the State of Pennsylvania. This course will strengthen and build upon the traditional "Pre-Algebra" skills learned in Math 7. Early units will include irrational numbers, using formulas, and exploring exponents. Later units in this course are designed to prepare students for the transition to Algebra 1. Students will explore linear equations, functions, proportional relationships on a coordinate grid, and systems of equations. Additional units will include geometry concepts and probability and statistics.</p> <p>* Students will be placed into the appropriate level of mathematics by a placement team, based on a scoring rubric as described on pages 4-5.</p>			
8022	Algebra 1- 8 *	Grade 8	Full Year	Every Day
	<p>The Algebra 1 8 course is a continuation of the Accelerated 7th grade course. Students will finish the remainder of the 8th grade standards as well as all the High School Algebra 1 standards. Units will include</p>			

solving equations/inequalities, functions, graphing equations/inequalities, systems of equations, radicals/exponents, polynomials, and statistics. Students will participate in the Keystone Exam at the end of this course.

A calculator is strongly recommended to be successful in the course and will be needed for state testing. The school recommends a Texas Instruments TI-30X IIS Scientific Calculator.

Algebra 1 has been aligned to the Pennsylvania State Standards and the Algebra 1 Keystone Assessment. Successful completion of the Algebra 1 Keystone Exam is a graduation requirement and can determine future scheduling and math placement.

Students will take both the PSSA-Math as well as the Keystone Exam for Algebra.

*** Students will be placed into the appropriate level of mathematics by a placement team, based on a scoring rubric** as described on pages 4-5.

8023	Geometry 8 *	Grade 7	Full Year	Every Day
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Geometry 8 is a formalized study of mathematical models of the physical world using deductive methods. The course includes a rigorous study of direct and indirect proofs, angles and triangles, congruences, geometric inequalities, parallel lines, polygonal areas, similarities, circles and spheres, constructions, volumes of solids, and trigonometry as related to geometry. The course is organized around a standard test, supplemented with student board work and group or individualized study. This course is recommended for those students needing a rigorous understanding of geometry for their future work.

Prerequisites: 82% or better in Algebra 1- 7 and successful completion of the Algebra Keystone exam in 7th grade. Please note a student who signs up for this course but fails to meet the prerequisites may be removed and placed in Algebra 1 again.

*** Students will be placed into the appropriate level of mathematics by a placement team, based on a scoring rubric** as described on pages 4-5.

Exploratory Arts Rotation - Students will take each of the following courses - one per 9-weeks:

8670	Career Readiness 8	Grade 8	Full Year	Every Day
8680	FACS 8			
8690	Tech 8			
8710	Health 8			

- **Career Readiness 8:** Students will be given the opportunities to assess self interests, build skills, identify and explore careers aligned to those interests and skills. The course is aligned with the PA career education and work standards and addresses four areas of knowledge: Career Awareness and Preparation (What career opportunities are available); Career Acquisition (Getting a Job); Career Retention and Advancement (Being a good employee and furthering your career); and Entrepreneurship. During this course, students will establish an on-line career readiness portfolio and continue to develop their career plan.
- **FACS 8** covers Foods and Nutrition, Personal Development, and Resource Management. Students will engage in thinking routines to examine food systems, participate in hands-on cooking labs to develop various culinary skills, and practice proper table etiquette. They will also explore age-appropriate emotional self-regulation strategies. A key component of the course is an upcycled sewing project, which highlights the impact of fast fashion and cultural influences. Through this project, students will learn essential sewing techniques that can be applied to clothing repair or serve as a foundation for further interest in sewing and fashion.
- **Technology 8:** Integrates the technological systems of manufacturing, construction, power and energy, communications, and transportation technology systems within an activity driven approach. Technology education students will work through different projects that provide interesting and fun learning experiences. Upon completion, students will have baseline knowledge of how technology affects and shapes our daily lives, while also developing problem solving skills.

- **Health 8:** Students will focus on their most important asset, her/his health. The purpose of this class is to provide students essential information about the challenges that face them, learn the wellness tools to help them make critical decisions, and advocate for lifelong healthy concepts. Students will be evaluated through written assessment, project-based assignments, and most importantly student-designed advocacy missions which will allow the students to extend their learning beyond the classroom both locally in their school and community and more far reaching locations such as our state, nation, or world. Students will be exposed to the dangers, diseases and effects in connection with alcohol, drugs, and tobacco products. Additionally, students will learn the art of decision-making and refusal skills as well as the importance of knowing how to get help or give help to those who are faced with difficult issues and situations. An in-depth look at mental health issues will include bullying, conflict/violence management, anxiety/depression, and character development. Basic body systems will be covered which will feature the digestive, nervous, cardiovascular, respiratory, and endocrine/reproductive systems. Physical Fitness and Nutrition concepts will be taught with a strong emphasis on the benefits of exercise, the fitness components, body image, eating disorders, and weight management. Lastly, students will study reproduction and infectious disease topics including the male and female systems, pregnancy, birth, STDs, HIV and AIDS.

8700	Physical Education 8	Grade 8	Full Year	Every Other Day
Students will use the skill acquisition and fitness knowledge learned in Physical Education 7 to further expand their efforts in fitness and skill improvement in new activities, exercises and team/individual sport units. Students will be expected to monitor and improve their fitness levels consistently, while actively participating to one's individual potential in every area. An opportunity to participate in advanced level challenges will be offered in addition to learning unique skill sets not offered in Physical Education 7.				

World Language Options - Students who qualify for World Language will select TWO language options. Students will rank the two options, but are not guaranteed to get their first choice.

8460	French 1 *	Grade 8	Full Year	Every Day
This course is the first step in learning to communicate in the international language of French. Attention is given to developing basic skills, with particular emphasis on listening comprehension and speaking. Authentic materials are used to introduce cultural information as well as the French language. Students will learn to talk about themselves, friends, the school day, their home/family life, interests, and general likes and dislikes. Focus will also be placed on real-world functions (i.e. asking for directions, ordering food, shopping, etc.). * <i>Prerequisite: Language Arts grade of 82% or above and proficient or advanced on PSSA-ELA 7</i> * Students qualifying for Level 1 World Language will take one period of World Language instead of ELA WIN				

8470	Japanese 1 *	Grade 8	Full Year	Every Day
Identified as one of the "critical need" foreign languages by the federal government in 2006, this course is designed to offer the first step in learning to communicate in Japanese. Emphasis will be on speaking and listening comprehension. Special attention will be placed on the 46 phonetic writing symbols called "hiragana" and a limited number of Chinese characters called "kanji." The students will be able to exchange greetings, introduce themselves and respond to questions about themselves. In addition, students will be able to tell time, state their likes and dislikes, their daily activities and plans for vacation. * <i>Prerequisite: Language Arts grade of 82% or above and proficient or advanced on PSSA-ELA 7</i> * Students qualifying for Level 1 World Language will take one period of World Language instead of ELA WIN				

8480	Latin 1 *	Grade 8	Full Year	Every Day
<p>In this course, students improve their English vocabulary while studying the Latin language and the culture of ancient Rome. Because Latin is a Classical language, it is introduced to students through a story-based format. We follow the real lives of a family from ancient Pompeii, Italy. Emphasis is on Latin vocabulary, English derivatives, grammar, and the ancient culture of Pompeii. Reading and translation skills are emphasized.</p> <p>* <i>Prerequisite: Language Arts grade of 82% or above and proficient or advanced on PSSA-ELA 7</i></p> <p>* Students qualifying for Level 1 World Language will take one period of World Language instead of ELA WIN</p>				

8490	Spanish 1 *	Grade 8	Full Year	Every Day
<p>In this course, students learn to listen, speak, read and write about basic activities and needs of everyday life, including themselves, their family members and friends. Using all four skills areas, students introduce themselves; describe people, places, and objects. Students talk about school life, family, and routine activities. Cultural aspects and various holidays of the Hispanic world are discussed.</p> <p>* <i>Prerequisite: Language Arts grade of 82% or above and proficient or advanced on PSSA-ELA 7</i></p> <p>* Students qualifying for Level 1 World Language will take one period of World Language instead of ELA WIN</p>				

INTERVENTION & SUPPORT: Student placement will be determined by data team

8011	ELA WIN 8	Grade 8	Full Year	Every Day
<p>The “What I Need” (WIN) period allows all students to receive data-based, targeted and skills-based remediation or enrichment in English Language Arts. Students’ skills are assessed using multiple measures and monitored over time to assess their skills and needs. The WIN period is part of Shaler Area Middle School’s Multi-Tiered System of Supports.</p>				

8021	Math WIN 8	Grade 8	Full Year	Every Day
<p>The “What I Need” (WIN) period allows all students to receive data-based, targeted and skills-based remediation or enrichment in mathematics. Students’ skills are assessed using multiple measures and monitored over time to assess their skills and needs. The WIN period is part of Shaler Area Middle School’s Multi-Tiered System of Supports.</p>				

ELECTIVES:

All 8th grade students must choose THREE electives and TWO alternatives

8801	Chorus 8	Grade 8	Full Year	Every Other Day
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Eighth grade chorus is a yearlong, fully graded course geared to students who desire to learn and practice healthy singing techniques. Students will study and perform different genres and styles of music. They will also study music theory, and sight-reading. All students will be required to sing in both large and small groups and may be asked to sing solos at the discretion of the director. Harmony and part-singing will be emphasized. Instruction will include the understanding of stage presence and concert etiquette.

All students will participate in at least two concerts throughout the year. Attendance at these concerts and after school dress rehearsals is mandatory.

8802	Band 8	Grade 8	Full Year	Every Other Day
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Eighth grade band offers students the opportunity to participate in an instrumental musical ensemble, which explores various musical styles and prepares for entering the High School band. This band will meet every other day. **There will be at least three required performances throughout the year.**

Prerequisite:

- *7th grade band or at least two years of experience on the instrument.*
- *Percussionists must be proficient on both snare and mallets and will still need a bell kit.*
- *An instrument is required for participation in Band. If you are playing a larger instrument provided by the school, a nominal fee will be charged for maintenance and rental of the instrument.*

8803	Orchestra 8	Grade 8	Full Year	Every Other Day
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Eighth grade String Orchestra gives students the opportunity to participate in an instrumental musical ensemble that will explore various musical styles and prepare for entering the High School orchestra. This group will meet every other day. **There will be at least three required performances throughout the year.**

Prerequisite:

- *At least two years of experience on the instrument.*
- *An instrument is required for participation in Orchestra.*

8804	Jazz Ensemble 8	Grade 8	Full Year	Every Other Day
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Jazz Ensemble is a music class of select advanced instrumentalists consisting of various types of instruments: any woodwind and brass instruments, and rhythm section instruments (piano, drums, lead and bass guitar). The music performed by the group consists of swing, latin, blues, and rock. Improvisation and soloing will be taught in this class. This ensemble will meet every other day and will help anyone interested in auditioning for High School jazz bands. **There will be at least three required performances throughout the year.**

Prerequisite:

- *Director Audition Only.*
- *7th grade band or at least two years of experience on the instrument.*
- *Students must be able to read music.*
- *An instrument is required for participation in Jazz Band. If you are playing a larger instrument provided by the school, a nominal fee will be charged for maintenance and rental of the instrument (this does not include piano and drum set).*

8805	Percussion 8	Grade 8	Full Year	Every Other Day
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This is an elective for students who are interested in playing all types of percussion instruments. World drums, as well as bucket drums, snare, bass, bells and other percussion instruments will be used for ensemble playing in class. There are no concert requirements for this class and no prior experience is necessary. Topics during class will also include history and sound production as well as reading and writing music. This is a year-long class that meets every other day.

8806	Instrumental Exploration 8	Grade 8	Full Year	Every Other Day
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Students will explore the basic techniques of piano playing, guitar playing and the art of the hand drumming. This class also includes lessons in music history, basic music theory and the reading and writing of music notation.

While studying piano and guitar, an emphasis will be placed on both single note and chordal playing. Students will also experience the art of a drum circle which includes the values of unity and teamwork while exploring the rhythms and melodies of West Africa.

All classes are activity based. Every student will be given the opportunity to experience music and all it has to offer in a positive learning atmosphere. Students are graded for positive participation daily and on assigned work and class performance evaluations.

8807	Kids & You 8	Grade 8	Full Year	Every Other Day
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The focus of this course is to provide a fundamental understanding of child care techniques needed to become a competent babysitter. Students will participate in a variety of learning experiences to acquire essential knowledge and skills, including, but not limited to: identifying safety issues/caring for injury, effectively communicating with parents, creating age appropriate activities to use when babysitting, and performing basic child care skills. Participants will be given the opportunity to use the Baby-Think-It-Over (child care simulator), plan and prepare fun nutritional snacks, and apply problem solving skills to construct a “kid-centered” project. Basic financial planning and money management skills will be introduced as they relate to babysitting.

8808	3-D Art 8	Grade 8	Full Year	Every Other Day
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Do you like working with your hands? 3-D Arts is a Visual Arts class meant for students who enjoy artmaking but drawing isn't their “thing”. Hands-on opportunities such as working with clay, using the pottery wheel, handmade paper, paper-clay and wire armature, as well as other sculptural techniques to create 3-D art installations. Students will also explore Art history, art criticism, and aesthetics.

8809	Graphic Design/ Yearbook 8	Grade 8	Full Year	Every Other Day
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Are you a fan of digital media, photography, and graphics? Graphic Design is a Visual Arts class with a focus on developing visual language using both traditional and contemporary technologies. Students will also collaborate with peers in order to learn and apply Design Principles. The Engineering/Design Process will allow teams of students to effectively communicate ideas and create meaning. Digital design tools such as Digital Cameras, Keynote, Ibis Paint X, and Google Slides will be used. Students will participate in challenges allowing them opportunities to design for a purpose in the real world. One of these opportunities will be to collaborate in the design of the annual SAMS hardcover yearbook including page layouts, photography, text, and graphics.

8861	Creative Art 8	Grade 8	Full Year	Every Other Day
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Not sure what you want to do, but know you enjoy making art? This class is for you. Creative Art is a Visual Arts class for students who enjoy independent idea generation and outside the box thinking. This course will

investigate the questions “What is art?” and “Why do artists create artwork?” through looking at different contemporary artists and working with a variety of media. Hands-on projects will give students experiences in design, drawing, color theory, sculpture and painting. Students will also explore Art history, art criticism, and aesthetics.

8862	Drawing & Painting 8	Grade 8	Full Year	Every Other Day
<p>Want to draw like DaVinci and paint like Van Gogh? Drawing and Painting is a Visual Arts class for students who genuinely enjoy drawing and painting! Students will use their powers of observation to explore and represent the natural world using a variety of visual media including, pencil, charcoal, pastel, and Acrylic paint. All skill levels are welcome, with the motivation to increase technical ability. Students will also observe and discuss famous artists’ work as well as pursue an individual style and artistic voice.</p>				

8820	Recreational Games 8	Grade 8	Full Year	Every Other Day
<p>This elective is for students who have a desire to learn new activities that are not your traditional team sports. These games are lifetime activities that you can continue to play. Students will take part in dual/individual racquet sports and activities that promote movement, creativity, teamwork, cooperation and fun. Other examples of class activities are designing disc golf courses and obstacle challenges, ultimate frisbee, disc golf, pickleball, Speed Minton, ping pong, handball, dodgeball obstacle courses, and gaga ball. Students will also have the opportunity to create their own games and teach it to the class. <i>**This course will be IN ADDITION to the student’s regular PE class. Students who choose this elective are expected to <u>fully participate in clothing and shoes appropriate for physical activity.</u></i></p>				

8810	eSports 8	Grade 8	Full Year	Every Other Day
<p>Esports is a billion-dollar industry and growing in popularity. In this class students will learn about the Esports industry and the different opportunities and levels of competition available. Students will be able to develop and build 21st Century skills like collaboration, communication, critical thinking and systems thinking, among others. The open learning environment will give students the freedom to experiment, encouraging creative self-expression and problem solving. Different games will be used like Minecraft and others to be determined as well as having different challenges and tournaments.</p>				

8830	Podcasting / Media Literacy 8	Grade 8	Full Year	Every Other Day
<p>Understanding everyday media is a skill all students need to be successful in a technological world. This elective course will have 2 parts: media literacy and podcasting. Media literacy will analyze the role of media and its impact: understanding bias, misinformation vs. disinformation, recognizing AI deep-fakes, Google reverse search, advertising techniques and social media issues. The curriculum will consist of interactive online exercises, class discussions and quizzes. The podcasting part of the course will develop and implement a podcast for <i>Shaler Area Stories</i>. The students will interview local veterans, business leaders, non-profit leaders, community members and/or implement their own ideas for podcasts. Students will learn responsible production skills in how to: create a podcast, utilize podcasting equipment, master apps such as Garageband, interview guests, and edit post-production. Final podcasts will be published for the community to access. Students will be graded in a workshop format, based on their step-by-step production of the podcast. By taking this class, students will learn time management, critical thinking and media production skills for future employment.</p>				

8840	Introduction to Theatre 8	Grade 8	Full Year	Every Other Day
<p>Introduction to Theatre Arts offers students a general overview of theatre and its use in and effect on culture. Topics include the relationship between theater and society, dramatic structure, theatrical representation, and</p>				

the crafts of theater artists such as directors, designers, playwrights, and actors. Students will have the opportunity to learn and practice acting techniques including mime, improvisation, the Stanislavsky method, and the Meisner technique. Students will also design sets, props, and costumes for stage use; read and watch plays and musicals; discover theatre history; and explore career options in the field of theatre. This class is suitable for students with an interest in hands-on theatre experiences both on- and backstage.