



# MIDDLE SCHOOL

## PLAYBOOK

**2025–2026 SCHOOL YEAR**



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### 2025–2026 SCHOOL YEAR

Welcome to the 2025-2026 school year. Our new **Middle School Playbook** is a guide for parents and caregivers to support their child(ren)’s success in middle school. It provides tools to ask about academic progress, collaborate with teachers, and access available family resources. This guide empowers parents and caregivers to help their child(ren) navigate middle school successfully. We hope you’ll find these resources beneficial to your child(ren)’s middle school academic years.

Sincerely,  
Sean W. Bulson, Ed.D.  
*Superintendent of Schools*

#### The Playbook includes:

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### MIDDLE SCHOOL DIRECTORY

#### Aberdeen Middle

*Christine Kelly, Principal*  
(410) 273-5510

#### Bel Air Middle

*Laura Silk, Principal*  
(410) 638-4140

#### Edgewood Middle

*Monisha Thomas, Principal*  
(410) 612-1518

#### Fallston Middle

*James Johnson, Principal*  
(410) 638-4129

#### Havre de Grace Middle

*Brad Spence, Principal*  
(410) 939-6608

#### Magnolia Middle

*Jason Redmond, Principal*  
(410) 612-1525

#### North Harford Middle

*Marc Manzo, Principal*  
(410) 638-3658

#### Patterson Mill Middle

*Brooke Harrell, Principal*  
(410) 638-4640

#### Southampton Middle

*Dr. Helen Miller, Principal*  
(410) 638-4150

Middle school office hours are 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.  
North Harford Middle School office hours are 7:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

[Click here to access HCPS Middle School Websites.](#)

# A DAY IN THE LIFE

## OF A MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENT

### SAMPLE STUDENT SCHEDULE

We are excited to share a sample student schedule for the upcoming school year, thoughtfully designed to support academic success, personal growth, and overall well-being for all middle school students. While this is only a sample and individual schedules may vary, it highlights quarterly options in Unified Arts and offers choice for students interested in participating in band, chorus, or orchestra.\* Our goal is to create a school day that is both engaging and manageable, with a focus of every middle school student's success.

QUARTERLY CLASSES	Class Period	Course	Description	Marking Periods	Days	Room
	1	SS017B-5	World History 7	1, 2, 3, 4	M, T, W, Th, F	205
	2	MA017B-2	Math 7	1, 2, 3, 4	M, T, W, Th, F	129
	3	TE017N-1	Interactive Media 7	1	M, T, W, Th, F	A2
	3	HE017N-2	Health 7	2	M, T, W, Th, F	214
	3	TE047N-3	Career Compass 7	3	M, T, W, Th, F	225
	3	TE027N-4	Computer Science 7	4	M, T, W, Th, F	222
	4	LA017B-3	Language Arts A Writing	1, 2, 3, 4	M, T, W, Th, F	201
	5	LA027B-3	Language Arts B Reading	1, 2, 3, 4	M, T, W, Th, F	201
	6	PE017N-5	Physical Education 7	1, 2, 3, 4	M, T, W, Th, F	GYM
	7	SC017B-1	Science 7	1, 2, 3, 4	M, T, W, Th, F	203

\*Band, chorus, and orchestra are held every other day with physical education.

### EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Visit your child(ren)'s school websites for information on extracurricular activities.

# ACADEMIC

## INFORMATION

### MIDDLE SCHOOL SPORTS

Each middle school provides a two-season athletic program that consists of a boys and girls team in one sport each season (basketball and soccer). For rules and regulations governing athletics, refer to The Administrative Regulations and Procedures Handbook for Middle School Interscholastic Athletics located on the athletics page at [hcps.org](http://hcps.org).


Sports for Life programming is also provided in each season. This program provides athletic and recreational activities for our students with disabilities to compete alongside their peers. Each season consists of 8-10 practices with a culminating event at the end of the season. Activities are subject to change but have consisted of bocce and bowling in previous seasons.

 [Click here for more information on middle school athletics.](#)

### ACADEMIC COMMUNICATION


#### Canvas

Parents and caregivers are “observers” in Canvas. Observers can view courses, pages, assignments, course calendars, and their inbox.

 [Click here to access Canvas.](#)

#### Home Access Center (HAC)

HAC is an online portal that allows parents/caregivers to log in and view information pertaining to their student(s) attendance, classes, grades, and registration information. Access is provided to all parents, caregivers, legal custodians, and students. Parents/Caregivers will need a HAC account to access their student's report card.

 [Click here to access HAC.](#)

### MIDDLE SCHOOL MATHEMATICS SEQUENCE


The Office of Mathematics website includes links, by course, to what students will learn in mathematics. It also includes links to the middle and high school course sequences for incoming grade 6, 7, and 8 students. There are several possible course sequences for students based on their recommended placement. Student placement is the process of using data to make decisions about the right course for each student. The goal of student placement is to ensure that each student is given the right level of challenge, helping them build a positive relationship with math, and develop confidence in their abilities. If you have questions regarding your student's mathematics course placement, please contact your student's teacher.

 [Click here for more information on HCPS Mathematics.](#)

### UNIFIED ARTS COURSE OFFERINGS

The following Unified Arts courses are offered to all middle school students:

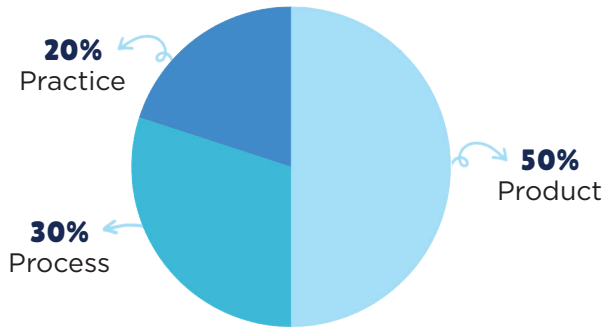
- Art
- Career Compass *(Grade 7 ONLY)*
- Computer Science
- Drama
- Engineering
- General Music
- Interactive Media

 [Click here for detailed unified arts course descriptions.](#)

# ACADEMIC

## INFORMATION, CONTINUED

### GRADING AND REPORTING



Grades update every 10-12 days and are accessible on HAC.

Examples of:

- Practice - Homework
- Process - Classroom activities, lab
- Product - Projects, tests and quizzes

### ADVISORY PERIOD

CAREER COACH LESSONS

DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP  
LESSONS

FUTURE READY SKILLS

Students will participate in iReady Mathematics Personalized Instruction- these 45-minute online lessons provide instruction tailored to each student's needs and encourages students as they develop new skills.

### STANDARDIZED TESTING

Standardized testing plays a key role in middle school education by providing a consistent measure of students' academic progress. It helps identify strengths and areas for improvement, guiding teachers in tailoring instruction to meet students' needs. By participating in standardized testing, middle school students develop essential test-taking skills and prepare for future assessments in high school and beyond.

**MCAP:** Maryland Comprehensive Assessment Program (MCAP) is an assessment administered in grades 3-8 in English Language Arts/Literacy and Mathematics.

**MISA:** The Maryland Integrated Science Assessment (MISA) is administered to grade 8 students.

**Grade 8 Social Studies:** Assessment as required by Maryland state law (Md. Ed. Art 7-203).

Mathematics	English Language Arts/Literacy	Science	Social Studies	Administration Window
Mathematics 3-8	ELA/L Grades 3-8	MISA Grade 5 MISA Grade 8	Social Studies Grade 8	<b>SPRING</b>

Click here for more information on National PTA state assessment resources.

# ACADEMIC

## INFORMATION, CONTINUED

### HOMEWORK HELP

Does your child(ren) struggle with homework and you're not sure how to help? Your child(ren) can ask their teacher for homework help or utilize one of the available resources below. Parents/Caregivers can also call or email their child(ren)'s teacher for additional help.

- **Current and Retired Certified Teachers Tutoring Services**
- **Harford County Public Library Tutoring**
- **National Junior Honor Society Tutoring**

 [Click here for more information on HCPS Academic Tutoring.](#)

 [Click here to request an HCPS Academic Tutoring Referral.](#)

### SPECIAL EDUCATION RESOURCES

At the middle school level, we focus on building students' independence and confidence as they prepare for high school. Special education services are primarily provided within general education classrooms through a collaborative teaching model, allowing students to receive specially designed instruction while remaining engaged with their peers. Based on their Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), some students also receive additional support in small groups or specialized classrooms, both within and outside of general education settings. Our goal is to help students become self-advocates and develop the skills they need to succeed in middle school and beyond.

 [Click here for more information on HCPS Special Education Resources.](#)

### ACADEMICS AFTER GRADE 8

College and Career Readiness (CCR) sets a standard to prepare students for both college and the workforce. It ensures they have the knowledge and skills needed to succeed in entry-level college courses and pursue careers in high-demand, high-paying industries. The Blueprint for Maryland's Future aims for all students to meet this CCR standard by the end of grade 10, fully preparing them for higher education and rewarding career paths.

<b>Math Mastery</b>	Earn final grade of A, B, or C in the Algebra I course <b>OR</b> Score proficient (750) or above on the MCAP Algebra I assessment
<b>AND</b>	
<b>Academic Success</b>	Earn a high school unweighted cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 3.0 or higher at the end of grades 10, 11, or 12

# STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

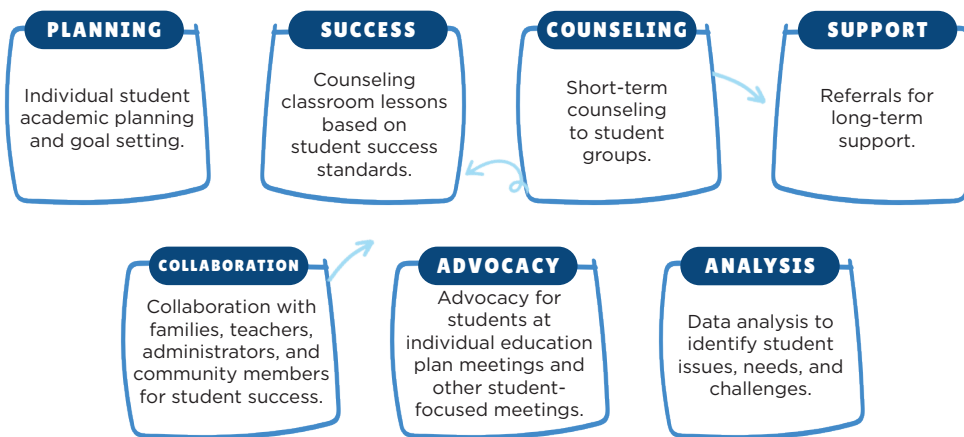
## INFORMATION

Harford County Public Schools provide a variety of specialized services intended to optimize learning for all students. Coordinated Student Support Services support the instructional programs within our schools by addressing barriers to learning and promoting the healthy development of students.

[Click here for more information on HCPS Student Support Services.](#)

### SCHOOL COUNSELING

Who are school counselors and what do they do for students?



[Click here for more information on the HCPS School Counseling Program.](#)

*The School Counseling programs in HCPS are based on the American School Counselor Association's (ASCA) National Standards, facilitating student development in three broad content areas: Academic Development, Career Development, and Personal/Social Development.*

### CAREER COACHES

As part of the Blueprint for Maryland, students will receive support from Career Coaches to help them discover their strengths and interests. With this guidance, your child(ren) will create a personalized roadmap through activities that build self-awareness and explore different career options. They'll be encouraged and supported as they set goals for high school and their future beyond graduation. Each year, students will continue to take part in meaningful career-related experiences, and their plans will be updated regularly to reflect their growth and changing interests.

# STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

## INFORMATION, CONTINUED

### ADJUSTING TO SCHOOL/GRADE LEVEL

The school counseling program assists students in adjusting to a new school or a new grade level:

#### TRANSITION TO GRADE 6

- Fifth grade students have the chance to visit and meet with the middle school counselors to learn about classes, programs, and opportunities available in middle school.
- Middle schools will provide parent/caregiver information through multiple channels including school websites, newsletters, phone calls, and in-person at a one-day summer orientation.

#### TRANSITION TO HIGH SCHOOL

- High school counselors will hold parent/caregiver information nights.
- Eighth grade students will have an opportunity to learn about ninth grade courses, graduation requirements, and choose classes for ninth grade in the spring of their eighth grade year.
- Students and parents/caregivers have many opportunities to attend magnet program information nights and open houses.

### XELLO: AN INTEGRATED FAMILY PORTAL

Xello is an integrated family portal. Families can explore and discover their students' future goals and plans with full access to their students' profile. And whether or not their child(ren) are in the same school or district, caregivers can access all their students' work from one portal.



[!\[\]\(d8ab143e904bfa3467271eec5af75a9b\_img.jpg\) Click here for in introductory video for Xello.](#)

### MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES

- [!\[\]\(93b46f02aeb0dec7325ae721eddb1f5c\_img.jpg\) Click here to access the HCPS Mental Health Zone: News, information, and resources relating to all things mental health.](#)
- [!\[\]\(df95500177ee1448bca3fb6d8db555eb\_img.jpg\) Click here to access Care Solace: Community mental health and substance use treatment.](#)
- [!\[\]\(bb046f17e347213a23b77fd6f78ea23d\_img.jpg\) Click here to access HCPS Parent Academy: Curated resources and workshops for parents/caregivers.](#)
- [!\[\]\(caeabde78de1bc129bee587046a203b5\_img.jpg\) Harford County Klein Family Center: 1-800-NEXT-STEP or \(410\) 874-0711](#)



# FUTURE PLANNING

Career and Technology Education (CTE) programs equip students with the content knowledge and durable skills to be competitive applicants for college and career-- and productive, successful citizens. Each CTE program offers unique coursework with opportunities to earn industry-recognized credentials and/or Advanced Placement and college credits, and to complete apprenticeships and/or internships.

## HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAMS

These are broader educational offerings available at most high schools. They encompass multiple subject/career areas.

- Accounting and Finance
- Advanced Technology
- Apprenticeship Maryland
- Business Management
- Early Childhood/Child Development Associate
- Food and Beverage Management
- Marketing

## SIGNATURE PROGRAMS

In addition to offering a comprehensive high school program, a number of high schools offer signature programs that integrate a specific focus or distinguishing theme with the skills, concepts, and instructional strategies of some portion of a school's curriculum. The theme or focus becomes the vehicle for teaching the traditional high school curriculum in a fresh, interesting, and challenging way.

- **Academy of Finance** (*Edgewood and Fallston high schools*)
- **Agriculture/Horticulture** (*North Harford High School*)
- **Biomedical Sciences** (*Havre de Grace and Bel Air high schools*)
- **Homeland and Emergency Preparedness** (*Joppatowne High School*)
- **Interactive Media** (*Bel Air, Patterson Mill, North Harford high schools, and Swan Creek School*)
- **Pre-Engineering** (*Aberdeen, C. Milton Wright, and Fallston high schools*)

## MAGNET PROGRAMS

All students are able to apply for our Magnet Programs through an application process. Application and more information is available on [www.hcps.org/schools/magnetprograms](http://www.hcps.org/schools/magnetprograms).

- **Harford Technical High School**
- **Global Studies Program/International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme** (*Edgewood High School*)
- **Information Technology Oracle Academy** (*Havre de Grace High School*)
- **Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps (JROTC)** (*Joppatowne High School*)
- **Natural Resources and Agricultural Sciences** (*North Harford High School*)
- **Pathways in Technology Early College High School (P-TECH)** (*Joppatowne High School*)
- **Science and Mathematics Academy** (*Aberdeen High School*)
- **Teacher Academy of Maryland** (*Edgewood and North Harford high schools*)

# FUTURE

## PLANNING, CONTINUED

### GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

Subject Area	Specific Credit Requirements
English	4 credits
Mathematics	4 credits, including: 1 credit in Algebra I <b>and</b> 1 credit in Geometry <i><b>Must be enrolled in a mathematics course in each year of high school</b></i> <i>(maximum of 4 years of attendance, unless in the 5th or 6th year a mathematics course is needed to meet a graduation requirement)</i>
Science	3 credits Students must complete coursework reflecting content from all three science disciplines: Earth and Space Science, Life Science, and Physical Science.
Social Studies	3 credits, including: 1 credit in American Government, 1 credit in World History, <b>and</b> 1 credit in U.S. History
Fine Arts	1 credit
Physical Education	1 credit <i>0.5 credit must include Foundations of Fitness and Physical Activity</i>
Health	1 credit
Technology	1 credit Foundations of Technology <b>or</b> AP Computer Science Principles
Career Pathway and Completer Program Requirements	4-6 credits 4 credits in an approved Career and Technology Education (CTE) Career Completer Program <b>or</b> 4 credits in a Career Pathway Program + 2 credits of same World Language + University Systems of Maryland (USM) requirements (4 years of math including Algebra II or beyond in the senior year)
Electives	May vary according to program

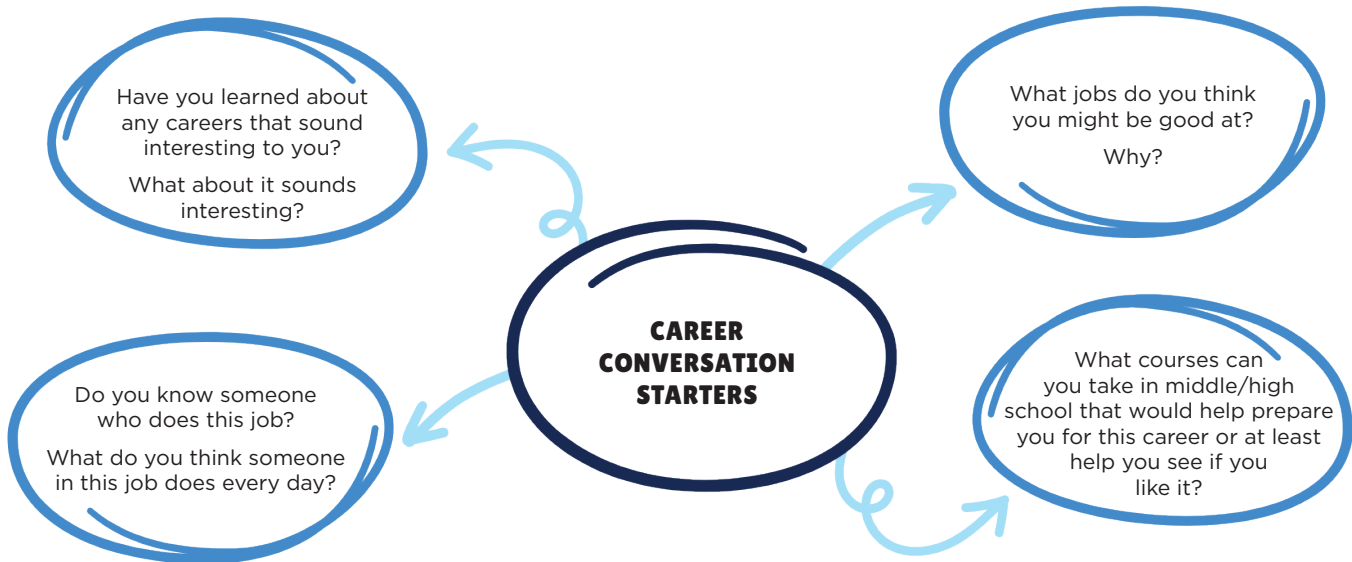
*\*Students must earn a minimum of 26 credits in grades 9 through 12 to receive a Maryland High School Diploma from Harford County Public Schools.*



Click here to access the HCPS Student Education Planning Guide.

# FUTURE

## PLANNING, CONTINUED



## LAUNCHING YOUR MIDDLE SCHOOLER FOR SUCCESS

Parents/Caregivers can empower middle schoolers to become independent and responsible by gradually increasing freedom and responsibilities.

- **Foster independence**

If your child(ren) is struggling or has questions about their learning, have your child(ren) talk to their teacher independently first. This will show your child(ren) that you have confidence in them and will help build their independence.

- **Encourage time management**

Use planners or digital calendars for organization. Reminders for homework and projects build responsibility.

- **Assign age-appropriate tasks**

Regular chores like managing laundry or meal prep build confidence and accountability.

- **Support problem-solving**

Encourage your child(ren) to think through challenges independently by asking guiding questions.

- **Allow natural consequences**

Let students learn from mistakes (like forgotten homework) to reinforce responsibility.

- **Model independence**

Show how you set goals, manage tasks, and handle challenges to demonstrate adult responsibility.

- **Build financial awareness**

Give an allowance to practice budgeting, saving, and making spending decisions.

- **Encourage extracurriculars**

Sports, clubs, and activities build teamwork, commitment, and self-discipline.



**2025-2026**

**AskHCPS@hcps.org | (410) 809-6193**

**A special thank you to those involved in the creation of the Middle School Playbook:**

• Terri Kocher	Prior Member, Board of Education of Harford County
• Natalie Holloway	Director of Secondary Schools
• Sara Saacks	Coordinator of School Performance and Achievement
• Mary Beth Stapleton	Manager of Family and Community Partnerships
• Gina Re	Assistant Supervisor of School Counseling
• Katie Eckstein	Coordinator of Career and Technology Education and Magnet Programs
• Blaire White	Special Education Teacher Specialist
• Elizabeth Beser	Special Education Teacher Specialist
• Marc Manzo	Principal, North Harford Middle School
• Ri-Chard McCarthy	Assistant Principal, Aberdeen High School
• Michele Piercy	Assistant Principal, Havre de Grace Middle/High School
• Sarah Paquin	School Counselor, Havre de Grace Middle/High School

The Board of Education of Harford County is committed to providing an inclusive and welcoming environment for all students, employees, and members of the school community. In accordance with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Board of Education of Harford County prohibits discrimination based on sex, race, color, national origin, religion, or any other protected characteristic in any program or activity it operates. Inquiries about Title IX may be referred to HCPS' Title IX Coordinator, the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights, or both.

HCPS' Title IX Coordinator is Dr. Eric Davis, 102 S. Hickory Ave, 21014, at (410) 588-5202 or [TitleIX@hcps.org](mailto:TitleIX@hcps.org); Title IX Designee specific to students is Ken Miller, 102 South Hickory Avenue, Bel Air, MD 21014, at (410) 375-0408 or [Kenneth.Miller@hcps.org](mailto:Kenneth.Miller@hcps.org); and The Title IX Designee for all other members of the school community is Renee McGlothlin, 102 South Hickory Avenue, Bel Air, MD 21014, at (410) 809-6087 or [TitleIX@hcps.org](mailto:TitleIX@hcps.org).

HCPS' nondiscrimination policy and grievance procedures can be located at <https://www.hcps.org/Nondiscrimination.aspx>. To report information about conduct that may constitute sex discrimination or make a complaint of sex discrimination under Title IX, please contact Ken Miller or Renee McGlothlin.

Discrimination complaints may also be filed with other agencies, such as the Office of Civil Rights in the United States Department of Education. Assistant Secretary for the Office of Civil Rights: 400 Maryland Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20202, 1-800-421-3481. For updated information on the Board of Education, visit [www.hcps.org](http://www.hcps.org).