



# **The 6-Period Day Model**

*Plan for changing the Middle School Schedule  
in Anne Arundel County Public Schools*

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# The 6-Period Day Model



## Overview

This model consists of:

- six 58-minute classes
- a 25-minute lunch
- 24 minutes of passing time

Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies classes occur daily on a yearlong basis. Students will have increased opportunities to study World and Classical Languages and to participate in AVID or research based intervention classes at all grade levels. COMAR requirements are met for physical education/health and fine arts.

## Encore Courses

The structure in the Encore program shows progression over the three years of middle school, addressing the developmental levels of our youngsters by offering greater flexibility and choice in eighth grade. Encore selections will be redesigned over several years to match student interest and to meet the increasing demands of 21<sup>st</sup> century technology.

## Impact on Teachers

Teachers teach four out of six classes, thereby increasing time for job-embedded professional development as well as interdisciplinary and grade level content planning. Language Arts and Mathematics teachers will see an increase in student caseload, while Science and Social Studies teachers will see a decrease. The student caseload decreases or remains steady over the course of the school year for Encore teachers.

# Grade 6

|            |              |          |                  |          |             |          |                   |
|------------|--------------|----------|------------------|----------|-------------|----------|-------------------|
|            | <b>1</b>     | <b>2</b> | <b>3</b>         | <b>4</b> | <b>5</b>    | <b>6</b> |                   |
| Q1–Tech Ed | Encore A day |          | Language<br>Arts | Lunch    | Mathematics | Science  | Social<br>Studies |
| Q2–Art     | Encore B day |          |                  |          |             |          |                   |
| Q3–FACS    | Encore C day |          |                  |          |             |          |                   |
| Q4–WLC     |              |          |                  |          |             |          |                   |

**21<sup>st</sup> Century  
Competencies**

Students in sixth grade take Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies for 58 minutes daily on a yearlong basis. Two 58-minute periods are devoted to Encore courses.

**Encore Courses**

One of the Encore periods consists of four nine-week courses; all students take *World Language Connections (WLC)* and 21st Century Competencies in the areas of *Technology Education, Family & Consumer Sciences (FACS)*, and *Art*.

For the second Encore period, students select three of the courses listed below. Those classes are run yearlong on an A/B/C rotation.

- All students are required to enroll in *Physical Education/Health 6*.
- Students will choose two additional Encore courses:
  - *AVID*
  - *Band*
  - *Chorus*
  - *General Music*
  - *Strings*
  - *Intervention (students required to take an intervention course will choose only one other Encore course)*

# Grade 7

| 1       | 2              | 3     | 4           | 5             | 6            |  |
|---------|----------------|-------|-------------|---------------|--------------|--|
| Science | Social Studies | Lunch | Mathematics | Language Arts | Encore A day | Blue Day<br>PE/Health  |
|         |                |       |             |               | Encore B day |  |
|         |                |       |             |               | Encore C day | Gold Day<br>World & Classical Languages introductory course<br>or Intervention |

Students in seventh grade take Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies for 58 minutes daily on a yearlong basis. Two 58-minute periods are devoted to Encore courses.

### Encore Courses

One of the Encore periods runs on an every other day rotation and consists of *Physical Education/Health 7* (required) and either a *World and Classical Languages* introductory course or an intervention course.

For the second Encore period, students select three of the courses listed below. Those classes are run yearlong on an A/B/C rotation.

- One of the choices must be a Fine Arts selection (any music or art course).
- Students will choose two additional Encore courses:
  - Art
  - AVID
  - Band
  - Chorus
  - Family & Consumer Sciences
  - General Music
  - Strings
  - Technology Education
  - Intervention (students required to take an intervention course will choose only one other Encore course)

# Grade 8

|                    |                      |                     |                     |              |                |                       |
|--------------------|----------------------|---------------------|---------------------|--------------|----------------|-----------------------|
| <b>1</b>           | <b>2</b>             | <b>3</b>            | <b>4</b>            | <b>5</b>     | <b>6</b>       |                       |
| <b>Mathematics</b> | <b>Language Arts</b> | <b>Encore A day</b> | <b>Encore A day</b> | <b>Lunch</b> | <b>Science</b> | <b>Social Studies</b> |
|                    |                      | <b>Encore B day</b> | <b>Encore B day</b> |              |                |                       |
|                    |                      | <b>Encore C day</b> | <b>Encore C day</b> |              |                |                       |

*Possible option:*

|             |               |  |                                   |              |         |                |
|-------------|---------------|--|-----------------------------------|--------------|---------|----------------|
| Mathematics | Language Arts | (A-, B-, & C day)<br><b>World &amp; Classical Languages course</b> | (A-, & B day)<br><b>PE/Health</b> | <b>Lunch</b> | Science | Social Studies |
|             |               |  | (C day)<br><b>Strings</b>         |              |         |                |

Students in eighth grade take Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies for 58 minutes daily on a yearlong basis. Two 58-minute periods are devoted to Encore courses.

## Encore Courses

The Encore periods run yearlong on an A/B/C day rotation. World and Classical Languages courses are yearlong, daily, credit courses (*A, B, and C days*).

- Students are required to take Physical Education/Health 8 and a Fine Arts course; however, they may select two Physical Education or Music courses.
- Students will fill their Encore courses from the following choices:
  - *World & Classical Languages (daily: A, B, and C days)*
  - *Physical Education/Health (can be taken as one or two classes)*
  - *Art*
  - *AVID*
  - *Chorus*
  - *Band*
  - *Family & Consumer Sciences*
  - *General Music*
  - *Strings*
  - *Technology Education*
  - *Intervention (can be taken as one or two classes)*

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# Answers to Questions About the Proposed Middle School Schedule

## 1. What is the rationale for the change in the middle school schedule?

- The schedule allows for a balanced approach to core subjects and offers a curriculum of rigor and relevance that will result in well-rounded students.
- The schedule:
  - allows all four core classes (Math, Language Arts, Science, and Social Studies) to meet daily.
  - increases instructional time in eighth-grade advanced Language Arts and World and Classical Languages courses.
  - offers differentiated approach and options for students as they progress from sixth to eighth grade.
  - allows for interventions to aid struggling students.
  - increases the number of encore classes a student can take.
  - allows seventh-grade AVID students to enroll in a World and Classical Languages course.
  - aligns with MSDE Task Force recommendations.
  - meets the demands of 21st Century technology.

## 2. What is the justification for the reduction of instructional time given to Language Arts and Math?

- There is a more equitable distribution of instructional time across the four core content areas, thereby increasing the amount of time students spend in Science and Social Studies.
- The schedule allows for the implementation of an integrated, real world, project-based, thematic instructional program.
- Reading instruction is taught across the curriculum.
- The schedule allows for an increase in encore selections.

## 3. How does the new model affect the music curriculum?

- Students will have more opportunities to take music courses.
- Band, Strings, and Chorus classes will continue to meet every third day, all year long.
- Students in eighth grade will be able to select two music courses.

## 4. How does the new model affect World and Classical Languages?

- All students are exposed to World and Classical Languages in middle school.
- There are greater options for World and Classical Languages in seventh grade.
- The schedule increases instructional minutes in World and Classical Languages for eighth graders.

## 5. How will the schedule support opportunities for enrichment?

- The increase in time allocated to Social Studies and Science, as well as in encore offerings, will create opportunities for enrichment in various content areas. Curriculum will be developed to maximize enrichment opportunities.

## 6. Why are the grade-level encore schedules different?

- The schedule allows sixth graders to be more exploratory as they make the transition from elementary to middle school, and allows for more choice in course selection as students mature.

## 7. How will the schedule support advisory programs?

- An advisory program can be implemented as a part of this schedule. The content and frequency will be a local school decision.

**8. Will middle school children have an opportunity for fitness and physical education in the new schedule?**

- There will be a slight decrease in time for sixth-grade students, an increase for seventh-grade students, and an increase for those eighth-grade students who select double physical education encore courses. Eventually, the health curriculum will be moved away from physical education, thereby providing an increase in time for students at all grade levels.

**9. How will the new schedule affect AVID?**

- AVID will still be offered at every grade level, with fewer scheduling conflicts due to additional student encore choices.

**10. How many students will be on an interdisciplinary team?**

- At each grade level, there will be approximately 120 students on an interdisciplinary team (a team of four teachers — Science, Social Studies, Math and Language Arts — who work with the same 120 students daily). This creates a school within a school and offers more personalized service/attention to our students.

**11. How will the new schedule affect teacher workload?**

- Teacher planning time increases from 86 to 116 minutes a day, with teachers teaching four of six classes. Student caseload will decrease for some encore teachers but will not exceed current levels in any encore area. The student caseload will increase by about 30 students for Language Arts and Math teachers. Science and Social Studies teachers will teach more students each semester, but fewer students over the course of a school year.

**12. Will the new schedule affect the length of the school day?**

- The new schedule will match the current 6 hour, 40 minute school day in Anne Arundel County. It would increase if AACPS follows through with MSDE's recommendation for a longer student day.

**13. How much does this schedule model cost? Why does it cost more?**

- The total cost is estimated to be approximately \$7.4 million. The following factors play into that:
- Adding Science and Social Studies daily requires additional teachers.
- Increasing encore choices requires more staffing.
- Teaching 66 percent of a school day (four of six periods) is more costly than the current 75 percent (three of four periods), and more teachers are needed to keep class sizes intact.
- Reworking curricula.

**14. How were parents and community members involved in the process?**

- Community input was solicited at the Middle School Summit in October 2006.
- Both parents and community members were included on the AACPS Middle School Task Force (January–March 2007) and the AACPS Middle School Program Committee (2006).
- There was AACPS representation on the MSDE Middle School Task Force in 2007-2008. This consisted of a school performance director, a principal, and a parent.

**15. What are the next steps?**

- Scheduling model will be put on AACPS Web site, with public comment solicited.
- Fact sheets will be distributed to schools for their newsletters.
- After examining public comment, any necessary adjustments will be made
- Curriculum redesigned to address new schedule.
- Implementation for the 2009–10 school year.