



Beginning in the 2021–2022 school year, all HCPSS middle schools will implement an enhanced middle school model. HCPSS analyzed the middle school schedules at each school, reviewed COMAR expectations, and strived to make enhancements to the middle school model that will promote greater student engagement and equity as well as provide better alignment with state curricular standards. The priorities for the enhanced model include:

- Providing equitable access to fine arts programming and alignment to COMAR regulations.
- Expanding student choice.
- Providing greater consistency between schools.

Beginning in the 2018–2019 school year, five middle schools piloted the new model, which gives Grade 7–8 students greater choice and broader access to general music and visual arts curricular programming, in order to support student motivation and personal interests.

The new model schedule pilot was established to address student, parent, and community concerns regarding equity of program access and transparency in fine arts scheduling options, and to facilitate the full implementation of HCPSS visual arts and general music curriculum standards in alignment with national core arts standards and MSDE COMAR 2017 updates. These standards mandate that Grade 6–8 have the ability to specialize in one or more fine arts: dance, media arts, music, theatre, and visual art. Specifically, students who do not participate in performance ensembles may choose to receive in-depth instruction in general music or visual arts.

Additionally, World Language courses began to transition to a model in which one credit can be earned in one year.

Middle School Model Components

Fine Arts Choice

As outlined in COMAR 13A.04.16, school systems must provide an instructional program in fine arts each year for all students in Grades preK–8. Grade 6–8 students may specialize in one or more of the fine art forms of dance, music, theatre, and visual art. Students may optionally select a year-long study in band, chorus, general music, orchestra, theater, and visual arts. Dance options will be added in Year 2 or 3.

Elective Choice Offerings

Students in Grades 7 and 8 may select an additional elective course, including World Languages or technology courses, Reader’s and Writer’s Workshop, and, as space allows, additional fine arts classes.

World Language Programming

Changes to World Language programming address the need to offer consistent programming and build greater flexibility into student schedules. Prior to the shift, some schools had programs in which students earned one credit after two years, while others offered one credit after three years. More students were matriculating to middle schools from Elementary School Model schools that offered world language instruction.

The decision to award one credit in one year for the pilot schools was paired with the intention to extend the practice in all middle schools for the following year. However, significant budget reductions in World Languages and a turnover in the World Languages office during the initial pilot year delayed the timeline for implementation in all schools. Beginning in the 2021–2022 school year, all middle schools will offer the following:

- 1 World Language credit in one year
- For the first year of transition (2021–2022), students who took Level 1A in Grade 7 may take Level 1B in Grade 8 to complete the Level 1 credit
- Students taking a language for the first time will take Level 1
- For Year 2 of transition (2022–2023), Level 2 will be offered in schools

Note: Students taking both a performance art and world language, or taking both a performance art or world language and an intervention, will not have the opportunity to take another arts or world language course due to schedule limitations.

General Timeline

- School Year (SY) 2018–2019: Pilot in 5 Schools; Comparative survey of staff and students
- SY 2019–2020: Pilot continues; MS scheduling workgroup
- Fall 2020: Pilot continues; MS scheduling workgroup analysis; convening of MS administrators
- December 4, 2020: Cabinet decision point, which provided a soft green light
- December 17, 2020: MS ACC (catalog and scheduling) meeting
- January 2021: Scheduling begins for 2021–2022
- January–February 2021: Middle school families make 2021–2022 course selections

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The Middle School Model – An Overview for School-Based Staff

(continued)

School-based Implementation Plan

- January 12, 2021: Definitive plan for moving forward shared with school-based leaders
- January 12, 15, 2021: Share plan with school-based staff (the goal is for all school-based to be notified on or before January 15)

Career and Technical Education (CTE)

Changes to the CTE programming will be made to address state requirements and meet the needs of students as they develop an understanding of opportunities available through CTE in high school. These changes will be implemented in Fall 2021.

• 6th Grade

Technology Education will be a required, 45-day course that will meet the ESSA computational thinking and learning requirement.

Family and Consumer Sciences (FACS) will be available as a 45-day course that will include a food and nutrition curriculum.

• 7th Grade

Technology Education will be changed from a 45-day course to a full-year course that will satisfy the graduation requirement for technology education. Students will have an option to take either Exploring Computer Science or Foundations of Technology as an elective course.

Family and Consumer Sciences (FACS) will continue to be offered as a required, 45-day course that will meet the financial literacy requirements.

• 8th Grade

Technology Education will be changed from a 45-day course to a full-year course that will satisfy the graduation requirement for technology education. Students will have an option to take either Exploring Computer Science or Foundations of Technology as an elective course.

Instead of a Family and Consumer Sciences (FACS) course, this new CTE course will be a required, 45-day, CTE Careers course.