Our Vision
The Challenger Middle School community educates and empowers every child to excel academically, socially, emotionally, and physically. We model integrity, persistence, critical thinking, reflection, and communication. We accept individual differences to cultivate a sense of belonging. We rise to every challenge as we prepare for high school and beyond.

Challenger Middle School
10810 Parkdale Ave
San Diego, CA 92126
858-302-3000
challenger.sandiegounified.org

All courses are subject to change without notice.
Student’s first choice of elective is not guaranteed.

SDUSD Non-Discrimination Statement
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History
Challenger Middle School is named in honor of the space shuttle Challenger and her courageous crew which included the first “Teacher in Space”, Christa McAuliffe. The space shuttle crew perished on January 28, 1986 when the shuttle exploded during lift-off. The name “Challenger” captures the energy and the inspiration associated with a commitment to success. *It dares one to go beyond one’s limits, to have high expectations, and to touch the future.*

Bell Schedule
Regular School Day 7:15 AM – 1:55 PM  
Minimum Day 7:15 AM – 12:20 PM – once a month

Backpacks and Lockers
We do not have lockers for your books or personal belongings, so you will probably need something to carry your belongings like a backpack or rolling backpack. Gym lockers are available when you change clothes for physical education.

Classes/Teachers
You will have a different period and classroom for each subject. Between each period, you will have a passing period to get to your next class. Don’t worry about finding your classes. We will have an orientation day before school starts where you will become more familiar with the campus.

Counselors
Just as your teachers are here to help you learn new information and to assist you in using that new knowledge, your counselors are here to provide you with added support. They will work with you in planning your school program and will assist you with problems if they arise during the school year. Parents may contact the counselors by emailing the counselor or calling the school.

Library Media Center
Challenger’s Library Media Center is open to all students for a variety of activities including borrowing books for reading and research. It usually opens for student use after textbook distribution is complete.

Lunch
You will get a new PIN on the first day of school. Challenger has two lunches. You will find out which lunch you will have when you receive your schedule. When you have eaten your lunch, you may sit with your friends, play basketball, or go to the library.

PowerSchool Accounts
Each student will use the same account they used in elementary. Parents who need new accounts will be sent information about the second week of school. Please sign in regularly to check grades and attendance.

Standardized Grading
New for 21-22! The San Diego Unified School District is transitioning to standardized grading at the secondary level. More information will be provided in Challenger’s grading policy and in each teacher’s syllabi.

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Course Catalog

The purpose of this catalog is to provide students and parents with information needed to develop an appropriate educational plan. Please review this information and make course selections carefully since it may not be possible to change your schedule in the fall. The counselors will make every effort to place students in the courses selected on the program card, however, appropriate placement in core classes, balancing class size, and course eligibility will also be determining factors.

All courses are subject to change without notice.

Challenger Middle School is organized under a middle school configuration. Content and performance standards will be planned, aligned, and implemented within courses and content areas. All students are required to take the classes listed at the right for the school year.

Advisory
Advisory class is a seventeen minute class where students can participate in school spirit activities, build a school community, learn self-management and study habits skills, academic and citizenship progress checks, and provide an opportunity for the school to distribute flyers and watch Challenger Television (CTV) to learn about school news, upcoming events, and CATS awards.

Science – One Semester
The sixth grade science curriculum will be following the NGSS (Next Generation Science Standards) which consists of Earth, Life and Physical science. Engineering design and practice will be a part of the curriculum with an emphasis of inquiry- and project-based instruction. Students will complete several engineering projects (STEM) in which they will explore, apply, and expand upon their knowledge of the concepts learned in class. There will be an emphasis placed on student science notebooks, which require students to: make observations, collect data, organize information, compare findings, communicate thinking and relate data in these areas.

Mathematics - While we ask for your placement preference on the course selection survey, other data such as grades, test scores, and teacher recommendations are also considered when determining placement.

• Common Core
Instructional time focuses on five critical areas: (1) perform faction and decimal operations and developing an understanding of integers and the coordinate plane; (2) developing understanding of ratios and using ratio reasoning; (3) writing and interpreting algebraic expressions and equations; (4)solving real world and mathematical problems involving area, surface area, and volume (5) developing understanding of statistical variability and summarizing distributions of data.

• Accelerated
Students who are enrolled in this course will be able to complete the three years of middle school math (CC Math 6, CC Math 7, and CC Math 8) in only two years. Therefore, it is a rigorous and fast-paced curriculum that covers the full year of the Common Core Math 6 as outlined above and the first half of Common Core Math 7 as outlined below: Common Core Math 7 - Instructional time should focus on four critical areas: (1) understanding and performing operations with rational numbers; (2) formulating and reasoning about expressions and equations; (3) developing understanding of and applying proportional relationships; (4) developing understanding of operations with rational numbers and working with expressions and linear equations.

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**Physical Education**

An Essential Discipline: Physical Education is an integral part of the educational program for all students. It teaches students how their bodies move, how to perform a variety of physical activities, the health-related benefits of regular physical activity, and a healthy lifestyle. It also provides learning experiences that meet the developmental needs of students. With physical education, students become confident, independent, self-controlled, and resilient. They develop positive social skills, learn to set and strive for personal achievement goals, assume leadership, cooperate with others, accept responsibility for their own behavior, and improve their academic performance. In middle school, the specific content standards emphasize working cooperatively to achieve a common goal, meeting challenges, making decisions, and working as a team to solve prob

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**Physical Education – General Information**

**We would like to welcome you and your child to Challenger!**

Our goal is to enhance the quality and productivity of each student’s life through participation in our physical education program.

**Students will:**

- Develop social skills to work cooperatively with others.
- Learn the physical skills to perform a variety of activities.
- Be physically fit and participate regularly in physical activity.
- Establish a foundation and develop an awareness of the importance of physical well-being.

For the success and safety of your child, students are required to change into a physical education uniform to participate in daily class activities. Uniforms may be purchased at school or a store of your choice. The Challenger Physical Education uniform consists of a gray T-shirt, navy shorts, socks, and lace up athletic shoes.

We also encourage students have a “subset” or “back-up” set of PE clothing, comparable to the PE uniform. This set consists of a gray t-shirt and navy blue shorts, or sweats. There should be no logos, hoods, zippers, pockets, or buttons. This set is used in the event the PE uniform is misplaced or forgotten.

If you choose to purchase the clothing and/or lock at Challenger, the first opportunity to purchase PE clothing will be about a week before the new student orientation that takes place before school starts. Students may also purchase the clothing during the first week of school and throughout the school year if needed.

Students will be assigned a basket in the locker section to store uniforms and towels. Students are encouraged to bring combination lock to secure their belongings. All students are encouraged to shower after activities. Private showers are available for those with special needs. We are looking forward to working as a team with you and your student.

**Everyone is a Winner in this Game Plan!**
Placement Guide: Common Core or Advanced

At Challenger Middle School, we have two levels of classes in English and history (social sciences): Common Core and Advanced. Common Core classes provide a rigorous curriculum that meet the needs of the majority of students. Students who are very interested in or excel in one or more of these subjects, are encouraged to select Advanced. Both levels will prepare students for an opportunity to participate in Honors/AP at the high school.

Parents have often asked which placement is best for their student. This guide is meant to help direct you to make the best choice to support your student. Middle school represents foundational skill building and appropriate placement is essential.

Please take the time to review the following descriptions with your student to make an informed decision about placement. As a reminder, Common Core and Advanced classes are not whole programs - it is likely your child will consider an Advanced class the appropriate placement for one subject, but not another subject. Rarely are students passionate about all subject areas. Your student’s counselor is available to help guide your decision-making around Common Core and Advanced classes. In addition, your student’s current teacher is a resource to help guide your thinking. Changes to placement after the school year begins is dependent on space and might not be possible.

**Common Core**

- Reads outside of school with the prompting of a parent
- Does writing assignments when assigned in class
- May take notes on a consistent basis in the classroom
- Has emerging organizational skills
- Talks casually about literature/history/science outside of the classroom
- Appreciates a moderate pace that allows for review
- Enjoys teacher-facilitated discussion in the classroom
- Is directed learners who find joy in exploring inside of the classroom

**Advanced**

- Reads for enjoyment often outside of school.
- Writes in their free time as a form of recreation
- Understands how to take notes and follow directions without prompting
- Has well developed organizational skills.
- Talks analytically about literature/history/science outside of the classroom
- Appreciates an accelerated pace and workload in and outside of the classroom
- Enjoys leading discussions within the classroom
- Is a self-directed learner who finds joy in exploring more outside of the classroom

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**Common Core English**

English in the 6th grade consists of the study of literature, listening and speaking, research, and writing. Instruction in reading comprehension, writing, vocabulary, spelling and grammar are embedded throughout the curriculum. Students engage critically with narrative, argumentative, and expository texts. The ultimate goal of the course is to challenge and encourage each student to develop a passion for lifelong learning.

The Common Core State Standards for ELA in CA are used in planning as well as the CA Department of Education’s Technology Standards. Students enrolled in this course should expect to read a variety of selected texts both in the classroom and outside the classroom environment.

**Advanced English**

Advanced English in the 6th grade guides students to engage in a critical study of their identity as readers and writers and how their literacy based experiences have shaped them as a community. They will also read widely to learn how to critique society and to use writing as a tool for entering the world of reflection, storytelling, argument, poetry, and the essay. Additionally, students will study the etymology of English as it appears in today’s words and the ways that authors develop a command of grammar to better articulate their meaning and to reach their intended audience. The ultimate goal being to challenge and encourage each student to develop a passion for learning.

The Common Core State Standards for ELA in CA are used in planning as well as the Social Justice Standards from Teaching Tolerance and The CA Department of Education’s Technology Standards. Students who choose to take the advanced course should be prepared to be challenged by reading widely and thoroughly as well as contributing critical thinking through writing.

**Common Core Social Studies** – One Semester

World History and Geography: Ancient Civilizations – Students in sixth-grade world history and geography classrooms learn about the lives of the earliest humans, the development of tools, the foraging way of life, agriculture, and the emergence of civilizations in Mesopotamia, Egypt, ancient Israel, the Indus River valley, China, Mesoamerica, and the Mediterranean basin. Although teachers should keep the focus on ancient events and problems, this course gives students the opportunity to grapple with geography, environmental issues, political systems and power structures, and civic engagement with fundamental ideas about citizenship, freedom, morality, and law, which also exist in the modern world. Students practice history as an interpretative discipline. They read written primary sources and secondary sources, investigate visual primary sources, and learn how to analyze multiple points of view, cite evidence from sources, and make claims based on that evidence in writing and speaking.

**Advanced Social Studies** – One Semester

Advanced History-Social Studies 6 is a rigorous course that has students explore in-depth case studies of different ancient societies to identify patterns that span the scope of time and region. Students will work with abstract and complex themes. Discussions will center around sites of encounters, diffusion of ideas, and changes and continuities still observed in today’s world. Students will articulate their learning in a range of diverse and innovative assignments assuming different mediums. This course studies ancient times to classical antiquity. Instruction for advanced learners will have greater depth and complexity. Opportunities to engage with appropriately challenging text and content, problem-solving, conduct research, use technology creatively, and write regularly on topics that interest them can be especially valuable for advanced learners. Strategic thinking and extended learning allow students to engage more deeply with content and may lead to global citizenship.

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**Elective Courses**

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**(ASB) Associated Student Body/Student Government**

(Application with teacher recommendation is required. On the course selection survey, make this class your #1 choice if you really would like to take this course.) ASB is the leadership class for our school, and it is an elective class. Students are expected to lead a variety of activities to improve the school climate. In order to become a member of the ASB cabinet, students must complete an application with teacher recommendation. Selected students must maintain high academic and citizenship grades. ASB provides opportunities for students to learn leadership skills by providing opportunities for all students on campus to become involved in the activities throughout the school year.

**Exploratory Wheel**

The Exploratory Wheel is designed to give sixth grade students the opportunity to sample a variety of course contents and experiences. Students will spend a few weeks on one topic then rotate on the Exploratory Wheel to the next subject.

**Instrumental Music Program**

Music is for every student! Challenger Middle School is a strong supporter of music in the schools. Courses in Orchestra and Band are offered contingent primarily upon student enrollment, and secondarily upon ability level, as determined by the Director. Challenger will include as many students as have signed up for music classes, but as with other electives, students may not receive their first choice.

Students who wish to begin instruction, or whose experience in music may be limited, will likely be placed in Beginning-level classes. Students with prior experience in music at the Elementary level, or who last year completed a Beginning-level class at the Middle School level, will likely be placed in Intermediate-level classes. Students with extensive prior experience in music, including completion of an Intermediate-level class at the Middle School level, will likely be placed in Advanced-level classes.

Emphasis of instruction is placed on developing expression through body and instrument (where applicable), producing a superior tone on the instrument or voice, developing aural skills such as intonation and balance within the ensemble, reading and performing music notation, acquiring confidence in sight-reading, and, if applicable, learning new skills with other instruments of the string orchestra or concert band. Each ensemble will participate in at least four school concerts throughout the year, and Advanced-level ensembles may participate in Performance Trips as well.

Advanced ensembles will also prepare for frequent performances of the most challenging musical repertoire at the middle school level. Selected wind, brass, and percussion students may be called upon to supplement the string orchestra, creating a full orchestra experience for all involved. Advanced musicians are also eligible to participate in the after-school Jazz Band.

**Yearbook**

(Application with teacher recommendation is required. On the course selection survey, make this class your #1 choice if you really would like to take this course.) This class plans, produces and handles all of the projects necessary for the school yearbook. Students will take pictures and edit pictures on the computer. Students will design layouts, produce copy, and proofread the pages of the yearbook using an online website.

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Educational Support Programs

**English Language Development** - Students in grades 6-8 scoring at the Beginning, Early Intermediate level or low-Intermediate level of English proficiency on the CELDT (California English Language Development Test) test will be placed in a two-hour ELD (English Language Development) course designed to meet the needs of students who speak a primary language other than English. The focus of instruction in the ELD class is to accelerate language development in order to provide a strong foundation in English and to prepare students to successfully participate in mainstream classes. Students in the two-hour ELD class will receive a differentiated course of study that parallels regular English coursework while providing focused English Language Development. Students are grouped together in a multi-grade classroom having only English Learners.

Students scoring at the Beginning, Early Intermediate or low-Intermediate level on the CELDT (California English Language Development Test) test will be enrolled in Structured English Immersion (SEI) courses for all content areas. These courses emphasize pedagogical strategies designed to increase the understanding and learning for all students. Sheltered instruction includes Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English (SDAIE) and English language development (ELD). English Learners at the earlier levels of proficiency may be clustered according to proficiency level in grade-level English classrooms that include native and fluent speakers of English.

Students scoring at the high-Intermediate, Early Advanced and Advanced level on the CELDT test will be enrolled in Mainstream English Cluster (MEC) courses for all content areas. These courses emphasize pedagogical strategies designed to increase the understanding and learning for all students. MEC courses also include Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English (SDAIE) and English language development (ELD) to facilitate their transition toward English Proficiency. English Learners are clustered according to their proficiency level in grade level English classrooms that include native and fluent speakers of English.

**Special Education Program (IEP Required)** - Challenger Middle School’s special education staff consists of Education Specialists, Paraeducators, a School Psychologists, Speech and Language Pathologists, and itinerant staff, which includes an Adaptive Physical Education teacher, Orthopedic-Impairment Teacher, Occupational Therapist, Physical Therapist, Mental-Health Therapist and a Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing teacher. Special education staff provide support and services inside and outside the general education environment to students based on their Individual Education Programs (IEPs). In addition, the special education team provides consultation for students without IEPs who are struggling academically or behaviorally in order to assist the general education staff with classroom interventions.