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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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.

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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**

Seventh grade science is a year-long course that is aligned to the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). It is an integrated course focused on how energy and matter cycle through earth systems through natural and human caused processes. This course is designed for student led inquiries into real world scientific phenomena using crosscutting concepts that stretch across the scientific disciplines. Engineering design and practice is a large part of the curriculum with an emphasis on creating potential solutions to today’s biggest scientific challenges. Students will complete several engineering projects (STEM) in which they will explore, apply, and expand upon their knowledge of the concepts learned in class.

**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 problems.

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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**
The course content will have an emphasis in the new Common Core Content Standards for grade 7 with emphasis on ratios and proportional relationships extending into real world and mathematical problems; number system with fluency in rational number operations; extending the use of expressions and equations into solving real world problems; geometry extending into angle measure, area, surface area and volume; and statistics and probability with random sampling and comparing two populations. The course will also include the Math Practice Standards to further the students' understanding of mathematics.

- **Accelerated**
This course is for students that far exceed grade level requirements. This course will cover the second half of the Common Core Content Standards for grade 7 and all of the standards for grade 8. This class will prepare students to take Advanced Integrated Math I in the 8th grade. (The courses of Integrated Math I, Integrated Math II, and Integrated Math III are the new high school math classes that fulfill the high school graduation and A-G college entrance requirements.) Prerequisite: Accelerated Math 6
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**
The seventh grade English program is designed to build critical thinking skills in reading, writing, vocabulary, listening, and speaking. Additionally, students will be involved in creating group and individual projects. A wide variety of writing types as well as literary genres will be studied this year, including narrative, expository, and argumentative. Each of the components in this program is aligned with the Common Core State Standards.

**Advanced English**
Students in Advanced English 7 will interact with a variety of complex expository, argumentative, and narrative texts. They will complete some tasks beyond current grade level standards and explore the skills addressed in the subsequent grade level standards. Students will work more independently, with teacher support as needed. Students may read additional texts, some of which are done as homework. Advanced classes require students to compose sophisticated, analytical responses with more complex and varied sentence structure in a variety of writing genres. Students will take initiative to engage in tasks with autonomy, collaboration, and leadership to develop critical thinking skills.

**World History & Geography**
Students will analyze the rise and fall of empires in the medieval and/or early modern periods of Asia, Africa, Europe, and South America. How the desire to expand, usually through war increased trade, ideas, and access to products that would forever change cultures as the world became more interconnected, and ultimately leading to the globalized society of today.

Prior to investigating a new empire or region, students will research the religions, or belief systems connected to that empire or region of the world. This is designed to gain understanding, as well increase tolerance.

World history can appear overwhelming, the names, places, and events can seem abstract and disconnected from our world today. To avoid this, we will look at the larger geographical, historical, economic, and civic patterns of societies. To answer these questions, students study content-rich examples that look at the broader influence and how history has contributed and shaped the world we live in today. Students will approach history, not only as a body of content (such as events, people, ideas, or historical accounts) to be encountered or mastered, but as an investigative discipline. Students will analyze evidence from a variety of sources to form historical interpretations that guide and support their arguments.

We will be accessing and analyzing content through a variety of platforms, such as Canvas, Google Classroom, Formative, Google, books, Padlet, PlayPosit, MineCraft, audiobooks, web-based news outlets, PowerPoint Presentations, hands-on & web-based projects, and discussions. Our classroom’s are active environments that thrive through student participation.

**Advanced World History & Geography**
Advanced World History-Social Studies 7 is a rigorous course that has students explore in-depth case studies of different 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 the world from late classical antiquity to early modern times. 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.

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.

Introduction to Video Production & Design and Modeling
Students will have one semester of Introduction to Video Production and one semester of GTT: Design and Modeling.

• Introduction to Video Production introduces students to the art of visual storytelling and the business of entertainment. Students will learn how to produce videos through all phases of production, including scriptwriting, equipment operation, and editing. All students will be granted a license to download the Adobe Suite of programs at home.

• Design and Modeling is part of the Gateway to Technology (GTT) middle school program for Project Lead the Way which promotes STEM courses and careers. It is a project-oriented class designed to nurture skills in collaboration, teamwork, while applying math, science, and technology. Students discover the design process and develop an understanding of the influence of creativity and innovation in their lives. They are then challenged and empowered to use and apply what they’ve learned throughout the unit to design a therapeutic toy for a child who has cerebral palsy.

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**MESA (Math, Engineering, Science, Achievement)**
This a year-long project-oriented course designed to nurture skills in collaboration, team work, while applying math, science, and technology through topics like exploring mechanical advantage, applications of kinetic and potential energy transfers in mouse trap cars, rockets, and musical instruments.

**World Language Courses**
Each of the world language courses is a high school level academic course designed to fulfill the one year of the two year world language requirement for high school graduation. Each course will also fulfill one year of the two year foreign language requirement for a four-year California public university. Students must complete and earn a “C” grade in a 1-2 class before taking a 3-4 class.

• **Filipino 1-2**
This is the first year course of the Filipino language series designed to fulfill high school graduation requirements. Students will learn how to speak, write, listen, and read in Filipino. The language and culture will be taught using a communicative approach involving learners in real communication. Students are also expected to participate in community cultural events.

• **Spanish 1-2**
The Spanish 1-2 and Spanish 3-4 classes are designed for advanced, self-motivated students who plan to enroll in level 5-6 in high school. Classes are oral-proficiency based and students are expected to speak the target language. Students will use the textbook and workbooks Avancemos (1-2) and Avancemos (3-4) to complement the lessons as well as integrate videos, video lessons, and other techniques to enhance the curriculum. Students will learn vocabulary and grammar and will familiarize themselves with the culture and geography of the Spanish speaking world. Students will receive credit towards their foreign language high school graduation requirement.

**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 TeacherOccupational 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.

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