

Middle Grades Courses of Study and Instructional Time

Based on California Education Code Requirements,
California Department of Education Recommendations
and National Subject-Area Associations' Recommendations

In California, there are both required and recommended actions regarding courses of study and the instructional time needed to deliver them to elementary and secondary students. In the absence of either the *Education Code* or a recommendation from the State Board of Education (SBE) and the California Department of Education (CDE), external recommendations from national subject-area associations are given as guidelines.

California *Education Code Section 46201* requires that all students in grades 4 to 8 receive 54,000 minutes of instruction annually. *Education Code Section 41601.1* specifies that a district can receive funding for offering an “extended” day (e.g., longer than required by earlier law) if the students in grades 4 to 8 are in attendance 300 or more minutes per school day. This is usually interpreted to mean 300 minutes of actual instruction. Lunch breaks and passing periods longer than 5 minutes each are excluded from the 300 minutes.

Governing boards of local school districts are mandated by the California *Education Code* to include or offer specific courses of study with no associated time allocations, with the exception of physical education. It is the expectation that the grade-level content standards for each course of study either meet or exceed the content standards established by the California State Board of Education.

Middle grade students, ages 10 to 14, are in grades six, seven, and eight. Since there is not an *Education Code* definition for middle grades, there is some overlap. Middle grade students are assigned to the elementary grades (K-6/K-8) or in the secondary grades (7-12). Consequently references to courses and time reflect *Education Code* for both the elementary and secondary grades.

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Course of Study for	Ed. Code Reference	Ed. Code Requires That The District/School Board	Ed. Code Required Time Allocation	Not Required but Recommended
English / Language Arts	51210 (a) Grades 1-6	"shall include instruction..."	None	<p>California Department of Education <i>Reading/Language Arts Framework (2007), (page 290)</i> <i>Basic Instructional Program.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2.0 hours/daily for all students in grades 4-6 for 180 days • At least 1 hour and up to 2 hours in grades 6, 7, 8 <p>California Department of Education <i>Reading Language Arts Framework (2007), (page 290)</i> <i>English Language Development Program (elements that reinforce and extend the basic program):</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30 minutes of extra support for English learners K-8, • 30 minutes of extra support for struggling readers, K-8, • 1 hour of English language development instruction. <p>An effective English language arts program is characterized by: "In grades four through eight, two hours (or two periods) of instructional time are allocated to language arts instruction daily through core instructional periods or within a self-contained classroom..." (page 15)</p> <p><i>Essential Program Component Recommendations</i></p>
	51220 (a) Grades 7-12	"shall offer courses..."	None	

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				<p>For students at grade-level (<i>benchmark</i>) and who may need some additional support (<i>strategic</i>).</p> <p>2.1 ...for the adopted programs for English/reading/language arts. This time should be given priority program 1.0, 1.5, or 2.0 hours daily.</p> <p>For students who are learning below grade-level (2 or more years) (<i>intensive</i>)</p> <p>2.2 ...for English/reading/language arts students taking the reading intervention program:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grades 6-8 2.0 to 3.0 hours daily.
Mathematics	51210 (b) Grades 1-6	"shall include instruction...."	None	<p>California Department of Education <i>Mathematics Framework</i> (March 2006): (pages 9-11).</p> <p>"Adequate time is allocated to mathematics. Every day all students receive at least 50 to 60 minutes of mathematics instruction, not including homework. Additional instructional time is allocated for students who are, for whatever reason, performing substantially below grade level in mathematics."</p> <p>[For additional information regarding Mathematics Intervention and Algebra Readiness, see Appendix E, <i>Mathematics Framework</i> (March 2006), pages 338-373.]</p> <p>Intervention - Essential Program Component Recommendation 2.4 The school provides additional time for mathematic students</p>
	51220 (f) Grades 7-12 -Algebra taught in grades 7-12 51224.5 (a)	"shall offer courses..." Algebra course must be completed prior to (high school) graduation	None	

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				needing intervention. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grades 6-8 30 minutes daily
Social Science	51210 (c) Grades 1-6	"shall include instruction..."	None	National Council for Social Studies: 1 hour each day. ¹
	51220 (b) Grades 7-12	"shall offer courses..."	None	
Science	51210 (d) Grades 1-6	"shall include instruction..."	None	National Academy of Sciences : 1 hour daily with alternating labs. ²
	51220 (e) Grades 7-12	"shall offer courses..."	None	
Visual and Performing Arts	51210 (e) Grades 1-6	"shall include instruction..."	None	Association for the Advancement of Arts Education Review of research supports daily education in the arts for all students in grades K-7. ³

¹ National Council for the Social Studies. *Expectations of Excellence: Curriculum Standards for Social Studies*, 1994. In Chapter I, Section: "How Do We Meet the Social Studies Standards?"

² National Academy of Sciences (National Committee on Science Education Standards and Assessment, National Research Council.) *National Science Education Standards*, 1996 Chapter 3, Standard D.

³ Association for the Advancement of Arts Education. *Policy Statement on the Role of the Arts in Education*, 1996. "Our review of research [over 400 studies] has shown the need to daily include dance, theatre, and the visual arts in the education of all students (particularly students in grades kindergarten to seventh grade)." Successful programs must include a sequential curriculum, include a clear assessment component, and connect the arts with other subject areas.

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	51220 (g) Grades 7-12	"shall offer courses..."	None	
Foreign Language	51212 Grades 1-6	"encourage establishment of programs..."	None	<p>California Department of Education <i>Foreign Language Framework (2001)</i>: California students need to experience a four to five- year sequential program in order to gain mastery of a foreign language. Ideally, this instruction should begin in the elementary grades.</p> <p>California Department of Education <i>Foreign Language Framework (2001)</i>: "Foreign language programs in California begin at various grade levels and devote various amounts of time." In middle grades, framework suggests either one-semester course or a one -year course.</p>
	51220 (c) Grades 7-12	"shall offer courses... beginning not later than grade 7..."	None	
Applied Arts / Career Technical	51220 (h) Grades 7-12	"shall offer courses..."	None	<p>California Department of Education <i>Career Technical Education Framework for California Public Schools—Grades Seven Through Twelve (January 2007)</i> "Middle schools in California currently offer two types of introductory CTE courses: a "wheel," or "sampler," of CTE and full-year foundation courses."</p>
	51220 (i) Grades 7-12	"shall offer courses..."		
Health	51210(f) Grades 1-6	"shall include instruction..."	None	<p>California Department of Education <i>Health Framework Addendum (2002)</i>: All students should receive sequential, age-appropriate health education every year during the elementary and middle grades.</p> <p>No time allocation provided</p> <p><i>Time projection based on a daily 50 minute class = 2.5 hrs./week</i></p>

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Health	51202 Grades K-12	"shall provide instruction at the appropriate elementary and secondary grade levels and subject areas in personal and public safety and accident prevention..." (See Ed. Code for list of topics.)	None	None
Parenting Skills	51220.5 (c) Grades 7 or 8	"...shall include the equivalent to a one-semester course in parenting skills and education."	None	No time allocation provided <i>Time projection based on a daily 50 minute class = 2.5 hrs./week for one semester</i>
Physical Education	51210(g) Grades 1- 6	"shall include beginning in grade 1 and continuing through grade 6...not less than 200 minutes each ten school days..."	200 minutes / every 10 school days	California State Board of Education (SBE) Policy Statement # 99-03 --- waiver of time requirements permitted for middle schools --- minimum time requirements: For students on a block schedule, the minimum for physical education is 70 minutes a day for at least 18 weeks. SBE Policy Statement # 99-03: "Young persons benefit from physical

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	51220 (d) Grades 7 -12	"shall offer courses with emphasis given to physical activities that are conducive to health and to vigor of body and mind."		activity on most, if not all, days of the week."
	51220 (d) Grades 7-12 51222 (a)	"shall be required . . . not less than 400 minutes each 10 school days."	400 minutes / every 10 school days	
<u>Other Areas:</u>	51210 (h) Grades 1-6	Other studies that may be prescribed by governing board.	None	
	51220 (k) Grades 7-12	Other studies as may be prescribed by governing board.		
Computer Technology Literacy	51007 (a)	"...all students... shall have equitable access to	None	National association recommendation: 1 hour daily integrated with science and other content areas. ⁴

⁴ National Academy for Engineering. *Technology Speaking: Why All Americans Need to Know More About Technology*, 2002.

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		educational programs designed to strengthen technology skills, including but not limited to, computer education programs."		"Technology must be integrated into the curriculum so that it is a seamless component of instruction and evaluation." ⁵
Youth Leadership	51005	"In order to carry out the intent of Section 51004, the Department of Education shall annually encourage school districts to plan programs and activities which utilize the resources of fairs and youth leadership activities..."	None	National Middle Schools Association : "Exemplary middle schools center on the intellectual, social, emotional, moral, and physical developmental needs of young adolescents."

⁵ National Middle School Association Research Summary, 2001.