

The Swanson Anchor



February 2015

From the Principal's Desk

We are Swanson Admirals

We are Scholarship, striving to think deeply and to open our minds.

We are Service, connecting to one another, our community and to the world.

We are Spirit, celebrating our successes, our school and ourselves.

We are Swanson Admirals.

Our students and staff recite the Swanson Statement every day during STAR to reaffirm our commitment to the importance of scholarship, service and spirit. ("Scholarship-Service-Spirit" has been Swanson's motto for the last several decades.) Believe it or not, students will start the registration process for next year's courses in February. This process will help them to reflect on which academic habits are helping them to reach their goals and which habits are setting obstacles in their way as they tackle academic challenges. When your child brings their course selection card and accompanying information home, please take a moment to talk with them about which elective courses or subjects they enjoy and would like to pursue next year. Talk with them, too, about what subjects cause them to ask questions or about which they want to learn more. Throughout their middle school career, our students are evolving from concrete to abstract thinkers. While every child travels his or her own journey, each has myriad opportunities along the way to "think deeply and open their minds."

(Continued on page 2)

From the PTA

As we get through the coldest part of winter, we need to maintain our vigilance on safety. The decision to cancel or delay school can be a tough call, as we have seen, but on days when the kids are at school, we need to remember safe drop-off and pick-up procedures. For walkers, remind students to be careful on sidewalks and street crossings. As always, they should not have earbuds in and be looking down at their phone as they walk; looking and listening is important to avoid a fall and to be fully aware of people and the surrounding area. Please stay tuned for more information on safety initiatives at Swanson.

We have some great speakers planned for the remaining PTA meetings this year on subjects including School Safety, Alcohol and Drug awareness, Financial Literacy and the developing adolescent brain. Watch emails for details! We have been so glad to see so many people attending the meetings and benefiting from the speakers. Having Dr. Murphy come to talk to us in January was a great evening for insight into how he sees APS evolving in the coming years.

(Continued on page 2)

February 2015

- 5 Fall Sports Banquet
6:30 pm
School Board Meeting
7:30 pm, 1426 N. Quincy St.
- 6-7 Swanson Cabaret
7:00 pm
- 7 Swanson Cabaret
3:00 pm
- 10 NAEP Assessment
- 12 Scheduling Information Night
- 13 Early Release, No Late Buses or
After School Activities!
- 16 Holiday (No School for
Students)
- 17 School Board Meeting
7:30 pm, 1426 N. Quincy St.
- 20 Summer Activities Fair
6:00-8:00 pm, TJ Community
Center, 3501 2nd St. S.

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From the Principal's Desk *(Continued from page 1)*

Parents of rising 6th, 7th and 8th graders should plan to come to our scheduling information night on Thursday, February 12 from 7:00–9:00 pm. (Snow date is Thursday, February 19.) During this event, you will have a chance to learn about academic planning from your child's counselor. We will also offer break-out sessions during the evening that focus on our Math, World Languages, Reading, special education and Gifted programs and services. APS also has a wealth of information about academic planning via its Aspire2Excellence program. Check it out on the APS website at <http://www.apsva.us/Domain/95>. You can also learn more on Twitter at #APSAspire2Excellence. Remember that you are your child's first and best teacher. Let us help you to support your child's academic journey.

—Bridget Loft, Principal

From the PTA *(Continued from page 1)*

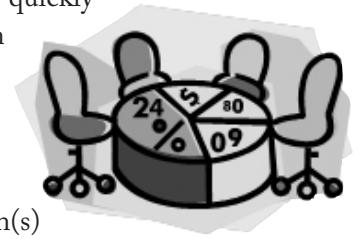
We sure hope to have continued engagement in the PTA next year, but new leadership will be necessary. All members of this year's PTA Executive Committee will be leaving Swanson next year, as our children move on to high school. The commitment is not very time consuming and offers a great way to learn more about the school and the awesome work being done at Swanson. Please let me know if you are interested!

We are excited to begin the second semester and are looking forward to warm spring days in Arlington. In the meantime, let's do all we can to continue making this the best year of Swanson's 75-year history!

—Tish Jenkins, PTA President

Spring Student-Led Conferences

Our spring conference season is quickly approaching. We will hold them the evening of Thursday, March 5 and during school hours on Friday, March 6. Students will lead a meeting between their parent(s)/guardian(s) and STAR teacher to share thoughts about the year thus far. Information regarding present academic growth will be incorporated within the conversations surrounding the student's school day and interests. Students will also discuss aspirations for the 2015–16 school year, including course selections and transition concerns as they prepare to move onto the next grade level. We will again offer open arena conferencing times for parents to drop in on other teachers and address a quick question or concern. **Drop-in sessions are limited to no more than five minutes each.**



Parent/guardian attendance is vital as these conferences play an important role in supporting students in becoming active participants in their education. We view this as an extremely positive opportunity for students to emphasize their strengths, acknowledge their weaknesses, and, with you in attendance, reflect upon and assess their academic goals set this year.

Conferences typically last about 15 minutes each. STAR teachers will send home appointment letters soon. We look forward to seeing you!

—Renee Harber, Assistant Principal

Keeping Swanson Safe and Secure

With all of the excitement at Swanson, hopefully we'll be seeing even more parents and families in the building. With all of that excitement in the air, please help us keep Swanson a safe place by remembering a few basic guidelines.

When visiting Swanson:

- Make use of the main entrance (or the cafeteria door when picking up students from Check-In). This helps ensure that we can keep track of any visitors to the building.

- We ask that teachers, students, families and our visitors never prop open exterior doors. This poses a security risk and could allow unauthorized people access to Swanson.
- Report any suspicious individuals to the front office staff. We welcome our families and community members in the building and all want to do our part to keep any suspicious behavior out.
- Do not park in reserved spaces.

Outside of Swanson, you can help us keep our Swanson students safe by:

- Helping to keep tabs on student behavior when they are walking to or from school or the bus stop. Be aware of the areas where your child is most likely to socialize with friends.
- Knowing your child's friends and their parents.
- Being aware of your child's use of social media and texting. Know which sites they use and who their online "friends" are.

If you are interested in taking on an active role in school safety, look for more information at the February PTA meeting. We will be looking for a parent volunteer to serve as an advisor regarding the parent perspective on school safety.

Thanks to everyone for helping us. As always, if you should have any questions or concerns about the safety and security of your child, do not hesitate to contact me or our Officer Kevin Treakle.

—Scott McKeown, Assistant Principal

COUNSELOR'S CORNER

Scheduling Information Night

Parents of rising 6th, 7th and 8th grade Swanson students should plan to come to our scheduling information night on **Thursday, February 12 from 7:00–9:00 pm**. You will have the opportunity to learn about courses offered for your grade level, high school graduation requirements, academic planning and specialized high school programs.

We will also offer break-out sessions that focus on our Math, World Languages, Reading, Special Education and Gifted programs and services. The snow date for this event will be February 19.

Course Scheduling for Next Year

Swanson counselors will be visiting students' classrooms to discuss course selection for next year and academic planning. Counselors will share information about graduation requirements and diploma options, and assist students in creating six-year academic plans. Representatives from APS high schools will also travel to Swanson in the last week of January to discuss high school course selection with 8th grade students.

All students will be bringing home a Course Request Form (CRF), which they will use to select their course choices for next school year. Students will also bring home a Program of Studies, which includes in-depth information about curricular offerings and programs.

Please take the time to discuss and review your child's course selections. Students need to return a completed CRF card, with parent and student signatures, to their counselor by the following dates:

- 6th grade: February 19
- 7th grade: February 19
- 8th grade: February 16

Applications for University of Virginia Summer Enrichment Program Due February 15

In coordination with the Curry School of Education, the Summer Enrichment Program at UVA offers gifted and/or high ability students a rich and rewarding residential learning experience. Students enrolled in grades 4–10 during the 2014–2015 school year may apply to attend a twelve-day session. Applications are **due February 15, 2015**.

<http://curry.virginia.edu/community-programs/student-enrichment/sep/summer/application-process>

2015 Summer Fair

The Department of School and Community Relations and the Arlington County Council of PTAs will sponsor the 2015 Summer Fair on **February 20 from 6:00–8:00 pm** at Jefferson Community Center, 3501 2nd Street South. The summer fair features approximately 90 summer program exhibitors, APS Summer School, Arlington

Aquatics, Arlington Career Center Enrichment and Arlington County Parks and Recreation. Monitor the event website for an updated list of exhibitors: <http://www.apsva.us/summerfair>

2015 Summer School

Information on 2015 summer school programs will be posted on the APS website in February. We will also send out SchoolTalk messages to provide information to parents about accessing and submitting summer school forms. Check the summer school website for updated information: <http://www.apsva.us/Page/2106>

The dates for summer school will be as follows:

- **Middle:** July 13 to August 14 (5 weeks)
- **High:** July 6 to August 14 (6 weeks)

As you are thinking through summer school options and monitoring your child's progress, please keep in mind the APS promotion policy:

"To be promoted to grade nine from grade eight, a student must successfully complete four of the required seven courses; (specifically) eighth grade Mathematics, English, Science, and World Geography." (School Board Policy 20-1).

The Supporting Your Whole Child Conference

APS Pupil Services and APS Consortium of High Schools will present the *Supporting Your Whole Child Conference* on **February 28, 2015 from 8:30 am–12:15 pm** at Washington-Lee High School. Parents of students in 8th–12th grade are invited to attend and learn about a variety of topics related to supporting their child's intellectual, physical, social and emotional well being. Check the website for updated session descriptions and to learn how to register: <http://www.apsva.us/domain/4332>

Parent Resource Center (PRC): Upcoming Events

Autism Spectrum Disorders: Parent Education Series

Date: February 18, 7:00–8:00 pm

Topic: I'm Determined

Location: Syphax Education Center at Sequoia Plaza, 2110 Washington Boulevard, Arlington, VA 22204

Register by visiting the PRC events page: <http://www.apsva.us/Page/2883>

LYLAS in ACTION!

This winter, Latina Youth Leading at Swanson (LYLAS) has focused on giving back to the community. The club has collected over 150 canned goods and 60 items of clothing for the needy! Two LYLAS members, Gillian Villarroel and Jazmin Diaz, helped deliver the donations to the Arlington–Alexandria Coalition for the Homeless (AACH), and the Arlington Food Assistance Center (AFAC). Great job, girls!



Activities Corner

Sports and Winter Weather

On occasion, as we've already seen this year, winter weather can cause disruptions to after-school and evening activities in the building. As soon as we are made aware that school is releasing early, or that after-school activities will be canceled, we strive to update our website and Twitter accounts with the new information. We also send out a SchoolTalk message with all pertinent information. Students will be informed via an announcement over the PA system. If you ever have any questions or concerns regarding the status of after school activities or evening events, please do not hesitate to contact the main office, check out www.apsva.us/swanson, or follow @SwansonSport and @SwansonAdmirals on Twitter.

Spring Sports

Believe it or not, we are into the final stretch of our sports seasons for the school year. Our last two sports to kick off are Swim and Track. Swim practices begin on Tuesday, February 17. The team practices on Mondays and Fridays at Yorktown Pool, and Tuesdays at Washington-Lee. Students will ride a bus after school to the pool, and will return to Swanson in time for the late buses, to walk home or be picked up. The season runs through the County Championships on April 23. If you have any questions contact Ms. Williams at Emily.williams@apsva.us.

Track practice begins March 16, and the season runs through the County Meets on the April 28 and 30. At the middle school level, track consists of sprint relays, 400-, 600- and 800-meter runs, high jump and long jump. There are no cuts for track and all are welcome! The head coach for track is Ms. Partridge, who can be reached at laura.partridge@apsva.us.

As with all of our sports, students must be in good academic standing in all classes, and have a current physical on file in the Activities office to participate. If you have any questions about Swim, Track, or any of our other programs, please contact me at 703-228-5510, or trevor.holland@apsva.us.

Multicultural Night

Swanson's annual Multicultural Night celebration is coming up on Thursday, April 16 from 6:00–8:00 pm in the Swanson cafeteria. Please join us for an evening of speakers, performances and a potluck dinner celebrating all of

the different cultures that make Swanson an exciting place to learn. Be on the lookout for more information and RSVPs in the morning announcements as we get closer to April! We look forward to seeing you all there!

—Trevor Holland, Activities Coordinator

On your Mark, Get Set, Go! Swanson Track Logistics

It's February and track season will soon be upon us. Starting in March, students interested in track should check the track board (it's in the hallway near the large gym) every day on their way to lunch. This is where I will post important announcements and information. As track is a no-tryout sport, many students tend to participate. It is up to each student to pay attention during practice as well as to read the track board to find out about forms, practices, meets, etc. Here is a summary of important information:

1. Students interested in track should sign up when sign-ups are posted in late February or early March.
2. Students need to have a current physical on file. A notation will be made by student names after they sign up indicating whether or not there is a current physical on file. Students should NOT assume they are all set – they need to check the track board. Students or their parents should follow up promptly if the track board indicates that their physical is not up to date or not on file.
3. Students also need to get all required paperwork signed and turned in during March. Again, I will post lists on the track board indicating whether or not we have received the forms.
4. Practices start Monday March 16. Students need all paperwork in and a current physical on file to fully participate. Track practice is from 2:30–4:10 pm. We generally hold practice every day, but some practices may be specified for a certain group of athletes (for example, a certain grade, gender or event). Excused absences due to doctor's appointments, academic conflicts or other commitments are permitted but please communicate them beforehand.
5. Students may be on both the swim and track team. In order to compete in the swim and track meets, athletes need to attend practices regularly. This involves careful planning and communication for dual athletes. If practices conflict, athletes should

determine with the help of their coaches which practice they should attend based on their needs and the meet schedules.

6. Track members are student athletes. The student part comes first – therefore, all members are expected to be in good academic standing. In addition, track members should attend any required or needed after school academic class/session with their teachers. Students can then come to track practice following the academic session.
7. We have only four regular meets and a limited number of spots for each event. If students participate appropriately, they will earn the opportunity to compete in at least one meet. Students who are open to trying different events are more likely to have the chance to compete in multiple meets. Students need to check the track board and initial by their name or sign up when they are able to compete in a meet. The regular season ends in mid/late April.
8. The county meet is in late April. In order to compete in it, a student has to have competed in the event in a regular meet.

—Laura Partridge, Track Coach

Swanson Artists Win Big!

Swanson won 39 awards in the 2015 National Scholastic Art Awards! Since 1923, the National Scholastic Art Awards has been the oldest visual art competition in the nation. All 75 submissions are on display near the auditorium. The Gold Keys will be on display at the Central Library during the month of March. The award ceremony will be at Washington-Lee High School on March 9 at 6:00 pm.

The following students won a Gold Key:

Grace Cheek, Dominick Coccozza, Lillian Di Benigno, Renee Dixon, Mary-Elizabeth Durgavich, Cari Farmer, Clemens Finger, Angela Gormley, Avery Goudie, Henry Hassett, Rachel Heinemann, Aidan Holland, Olivia Juras, Danila Konoplev, Abby Lewis, Calder Lowenthal, Theo Mazarr, Kelly McArdle, Jack McMahan, Mackenzie Nemoto, McCarthy Simmons, Olivia Springberg (three Gold), Sophie Wheelock.

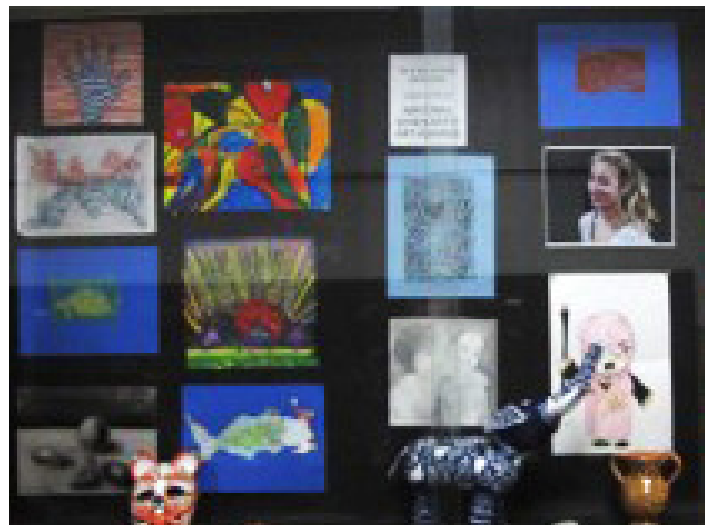
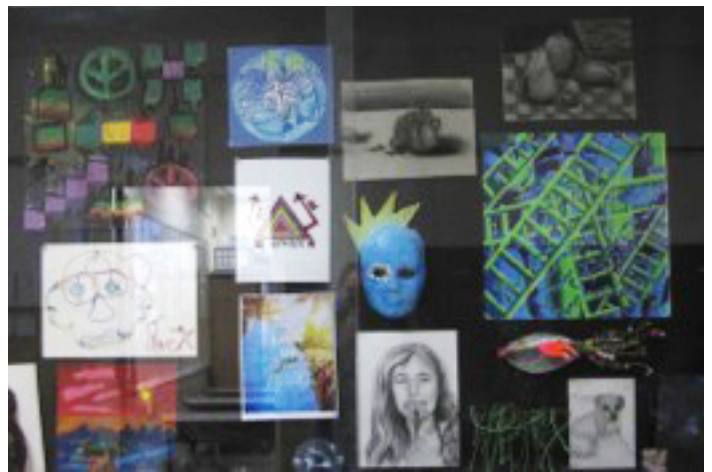
The following students won a Silver Key: Tor Bauman, Olivia Juras, Victoria Summitt, Sophie Wheelock.

The following students won Honorable Mention:

Dominick Coccozza, Isabel Craige, Lia Kiknadze (two), Zarah King, Jackson Pope, Nathalie Saulnier, Max Streitwieser, Aidan Wrenn-Walz.

Congratulations to all of our artists!

—Cecily Corcoran, Visual Arts Teacher



American Math Competition 8

In mid-November, approximately 130 students participated in the AMC 8 math competition held at Swanson. This is a well know national math competition and is extremely difficult. We had 6th, 7th and 8th graders accept the challenge.

We had a number of students recognized in this national competition. Four Swanson students earned a place on the national honor roll, which recognizes students in the top 5% nationwide. Sixth grader Nicholas Papavassiliou was top for Swanson with a score of 22 out of 25, followed by 8th grader Matthew McKnight with a 19, and 8th grader Sarah Barringer and 7th grader Claire Williams with scores of 18. All of these students will be awarded honor roll certificates from the Mathematical Association of America.

Just missing the honor roll cut-off with scores of 17 were 8th graders Julia Billera, Claire Cofield, Thomas Dickson, Jonah Margosis, Philip Suskin, and Liam Thompson; as well as 7th grader Michael Kyrychenko. In addition to Nicholas, 6th grader Camille Chiu earned a place on the 6th grade achievement roll with a score of 15. Congratulations to all the Swanson students who competed in this challenging mathematics contest!

—Laura Partridge, Math Coach

Continental Math League Contest

The third Continental Math League contest occurred on Thursday, January 5. The 6th graders continued their strong performance and earned another perfect team score with eleven students earning perfect 6's. Eighth graders also earned a perfect team score, with eight students making no errors on the contest. The 7th grade contest was another difficult one with two students earning a perfect score this time.

Top cumulative scorers in each of the grade levels are as follows:

Cumulative Perfect Score of 18:

6th graders:

Joel Brown
Camille Chiu
Daniel Nadel
Henry Uz

8th grader:

Hanna Xu

Cumulative Score of 17:

6th graders:

Casey Bloome
Nicholas Papavassiliou
George Stutzman
Luella Wallander
Samuel Youkeles

7th grader:

Henry Olson

8th grader:

Calder Lowenthal

Cumulative Score of 16:

6th graders:

Allison Craig
Reese Feldmeier
Leah Karush
Emily Mucchetti
Liam Norman

7th grader:

Claire Williams

8th graders:

Geoff Ax
Erika Christensen
Claire Cofield

Students scoring a 6, not included in cumulative scores above:

6th graders:

James Licato
Natalie Martin

7th grader:

Christina Sheckler

8th graders:

Andrew Cabalu
Natalie Chin
Zachary Meiners
Liam Thompson

The next contest, to be held in early February, will be reported in the March Anchor.

—Laura Partridge, Math Coach

The Latest in Latin

First of all, I just want to say that Latin students are *optimi* (the best) and I am privileged to teach them. The first Saturday back after the break, four teams of Swanson Latin students spent a good chunk of their weekend competing in a Virginia Junior Classical League Certamen (quiz bowl contest) against some formidable teams from around the state. Two of our teams (one from Latin I and one from Latin II) placed for trophies, coming in not far behind some classics powerhouses, like Basis DC, Classical Cottage, Herndon High School, and Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology. My Latin II team wants it to go on record that they did beat one of the TJHSST teams.

Another thing some students *opted* to participate in back in December was the National Etymology Exam, which tests students' knowledge of word roots and derivations from Latin and Greek. This was a tough exam with a very long syllabus of words to study. Of the 10 Swanson students who took the exam, five earned gold medals and two earned silvers! Congratulations to **Natalie Chin, Claire Cofield, Calder Lowenthal, Julia Billera** and **Owen Schaff** (gold medalists) and to **Emily Kile** and **James White** (silver medalists).

—Melanie Stowell, Latin Teacher



Special Education Corner

Special Education Cycle

The Process for Your Child to Become Eligible to Receive Special Education Services

“Before your child can become eligible to receive special education services, the school is required by law to determine your child’s specific needs. The school determines these needs through a process consisting of many steps, often termed the ‘Special Education Cycle.’ When viewed as an ongoing cycle with several steps along the way, the special education process is easier to understand.”

**See Anchor articles from November-January to view prior steps in the Special Education Cycle.*

What are the next steps once my child has been tested as determined by the **Eligibility Committee**?



Eligibility Committee Meeting

What:	When the formal evaluations of your child are completed, an Eligibility Committee meets to determine if he/she has a disability, as defined by IDEA, and requires special education and related services. The committee may also determine that your child is not eligible for special education services and that his/her learning needs can be met within his/her current educational program.
Who:	The Eligibility Committee usually includes the professional staff who tested your child as well as a Special Education Coordinator who represents the Director Special Education. You are invited in writing to attend this meeting and should plan to attend. To prepare for the Eligibility Committee meeting, you may request and review a copy of the evaluation reports, listing your questions and noting information about your child that may be helpful to the committee.
When:	Within 65 administrative working days (of receipt of referral) Student Study Committee's decision to evaluate for special education
What Happens Next:	The IEP Team develops an "Individualized Education Program."
What documents should I keep?	You will receive a copy of the "Minutes of the Eligibility Committee Meeting" which summarize the findings of the committee.

Please look for highlights of topics related to special education services in future issues. You can also view this information on the APS Special Education website: <http://www.apsva.us/site/Default.aspx?PageID=2865>

—Shannan Ellis, Assistant Principal

Career & Technical Education Course Offerings 2014/2015

The CRF cards (course request forms) will be out soon and the students are beginning to sign up for next years electives. We hope that this sheet will help you make an informed decision about choosing an elective that will be a good fit and will answer any questions you might have. Listed below are the CTE offerings at Swanson Middle School next year. Please don't hesitate to contact any of the CTE teachers. We would be more than happy to talk with you!

Technology Education

The information gained in the technology education classroom will give students the ability to make informed choices concerning technological issues in their home and in the world.

Inventions & Innovations

7th grade semester Course

The experiences include mousetrap vehicle kit, innovated mousetrap vehicle, AutoCAD, Legos & NXT robotics, a computer lab with specialty programs, tool safety for modeling, and the materials processing lab; for drilling, cutting, and finishing models.

Technological Systems

8th grade Semester Course

The experiences include CO2 Drag Racer, speed analysis, wind tunnel analyses, balsa bridges, structural testing & efficiency analyses, t-shirt design, AutoCAD, a computer lab with specialty programs, tool safety for modeling, and the materials processing lab; for drilling, cutting, and finishing models.

Technological Systems

8th grade Full Year Course

This is a Project Lead the Way course that incorporates national standards in mathematics, science, technology, and engineering. The experiences in this course include those from the semester 8th grade course. In addition, these students experience robotics, automation, electronics, and go more in depth with modeling and design challenges. For more information on PLTW: Gateway to Technology:
<http://www.pltw.org/>

Business and IT

Business and Information Technology classes allow students to gain computer based knowledge that will help them succeed in high school and in the work force.

Computer Applications-

8th grade semester course

In this class students will learn how to use *Microsoft Word, Excel, and PowerPoint*. Students continue to work on their typing skills and maintaining their files. They also stay on top of current events in the technology world. Like other electives, this course is a very hands on and project based course.

Digital Input Technologies—7th and 8th grade semester course

In this class students learn about careers and different types of input technologies. These technologies include: iPads, speech recognition, and digital cameras. Student do a variety of projects to demonstrate their knowledge; such as, making magazine covers and videos. Students continue to work on their typing skills and maintaining their files. They also stay on top of current events in the technology world.

Yearbook

Full year 8th grade only.

Students must apply to become a yearbook staff member. They are responsible for the creation, promotion, and sales of the yearbook.

Family and Consumer Sciences

FACS classes establish a foundation for managing individual, family, work and community roles and responsibilities through the education and practice of essential life skills.

7th Grade

Teen Living

- Semester Course
- Explores and teaches cooking and food preparation skills, nutrition, laundry and stain removal, financial management, clothing construction and care, time management and organization.

8th Grade:

Life Management

- Full year Course
- Explores international culture and cuisine and Eating Right, interior design elements and principles, basic financial management, sewing skills, participates in community service project, explores child development and puts skills into practice, explores qualities of positive healthy relationships and communication.

8th Grade

Life Management

- Semester Course
- Explores international culture and cuisine, teaches basic interior design principles, introduces basic financial management, introduces and continues to build sewing skills.

8th Grade

Taking Charge

- Semester Course
- Girls only
- Empowerment class for girls that teaches skills for making good decisions, setting goals, effective communication, positive relationships and becoming a strong girl.

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Chris Taylor	Family and Consumer Sciences	Chris.taylor@apsva.us



Swanson Middle School

Home of the Admirals

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