

Middle School

Middle school students are beginning to make critical and complex life choices and are forming the attitudes, values and dispositions that will direct their behavior as adults. They deserve an education that will enhance their healthy growth as lifelong learners, ethical and democratic citizens, and increasingly competent, self-sufficient individuals who are optimistic about the future and prepared to succeed in our ever-changing world.

Our middle school approach is based on the pedagogy that every child:

- Has the capacity to learn, grow and develop into a knowledgeable, reflective, caring, ethical and contributing citizen.
- Must have access to the very best programs and practices.
- Must be engaged in learning that is relevant, challenging, integrative and exploratory.
- Faces significant life choices and needs support in making wise and healthy decisions.
- Thrives academically, socially and emotionally in a democratic learning environment where trust and respect are paramount and where family and community are actively involved.

MIDDLE SCHOOL SAMPLE DAILY SCHEDULE

TIME	FOCUS
8:00-8:25 a.m.	Mind & Body (optional)
8:30-9:15 a.m.	Math
9:20-10:05 a.m.	World Language
10:05-10:20 a.m.	Break
10:20-11:20 a.m.	Art
11:25-12:05 p.m.	Advisory
12:05-12:45 p.m.	Lunch
12:50-1:35 p.m.	Acceleration
1:40-2:40 p.m.	Humanities
2:45-3:45 p.m.	STEM
4:00 p.m.	Studios Courses (optional)

*Middle School students have three hours per week of Physical Education classes

ESSENTIAL PRACTICES



PERSONALIZED INSTRUCTION

has teachers meet each student's needs based on readiness, interests and learning profile.



DESIGN THINKING

develops empathic thinkers who can take increased ownership over their learning.



EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

allows students to learn by doing while reflecting and refining their processes and products.



MASTERY-BASED

focuses on essential content and skills, allowing for deeper mastery within and across disciplines.



CULTURAL COMPETENCIES

acknowledge that the way to prepare our students to be global citizens is to recognize, incorporate and nurture the unique differences and similarities of our cultures.



PROJECT-BASED

makes learning more engaging, collaborative and meaningful, allowing students to develop deep content knowledge through the investigation of real-world problems.

INTERDISCIPLINARY BLOCKS

• HUMANITIES

Identity and Community are central themes in the minds of young adolescents and are central themes present in our Middle School Humanities courses. Other humanities themes are inextricably linked to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals: sixth grade-good health & well-being, seventh grade-reduced inequalities, and eighth grade-peace, justice & strong institutions. Throughout our studies, students are engaged in deep inquiry through examining history, ethics and geography through a case-study approach of analyzing topics, themes, problems and issues. The Humanities courses are also where students receive more sophisticated reading instruction within a wide variety of genre and strengthen their skills to be highly effective communicators in both written and oral forms.

• STEM

The STEM program seeks to cultivate and deepen each student's innate curiosity about the natural and built world. To keep alive the spirit of inquiry, we design learning experiences around open-ended questions and exploration of phenomena. We believe that the purposeful integration of science disciplines, technology, engineering and mathematics creates the conditions for deep exploration of the world, and that hands-on engagement with the skills and practices of these disciplines is essential for our students. We further believe that interrogating the world through the concepts and tools of STEM is but one mode of inquiry, and that truly authentic and meaningful learning must be interdisciplinary and foster students' abilities to make connections across the many domains of human experience.

Above all, we believe that the investigation of the world by students and teachers must be suffused with joy, rigor, critical thinking and optimism.

• CREATIVE ARTS & DESIGN

Our arts program emphasizes visual arts, performing arts and media arts. Students will be able to take up to three different courses within the same academic year. Each student will have three hours of Creative Arts and Design per week. In addition to having full-time art teachers, we are collaborating with some of the best arts and design organizations throughout Washington, D.C. to further enhance our program, giving our students unique access to world-class professionals.

MASTERY BANDS

• MATH

Our mastery-based program seeks to develop sophisticated and flexible mathematical thinkers who understand both the power and limitations of mathematics as a tool to describe and make sense of the world. True mathematical sophistication requires creative, critical, and logical thinking. Students in our program go beyond basic skill development and fluency to master computational thinking, mathematical modeling, problem seeking and solving, data analysis and visualization, reasoning and logic, financial literacy, and creative expression through mathematics. Above all, they partake of the joy and wonder of using math to create, collaborate, communicate and think critically about the world around them.

• LANGUAGE AND CULTURE

Cultural competencies are central to our mission. Our program is designed to teach children about world languages and culture, using language as a tool for

gaining insight into cultural beliefs and practices as well as for communication. The goal is to enable students to actively and comfortably participate in a world language cultural environment. In addition to Spanish or Chinese, students may also take any other language of choice in coordination with our Studios offerings. Opportunities for full cultural immersion exist through our Global Rotation Program that will be available for students starting in the eighth grade. Course offerings provide a range of experience and exposure to languages, from novices to heritage speakers.

ADVISORY

With the exception of X-days, students gather in Advisory every day for 40 minutes per meeting. The emphasis of this time focuses on academic support coupled with an intentional social-emotional curriculum. Advisory time includes one-on-one meetings with the advisor, self-reflection through journaling, team-building exercises, open conversations on topics related to social and emotional development, personal interest projects, goal setting and monitoring, and coordinating best uses for our daily personalized Acceleration classes.

• ACCELERATION

With the exception of X-days, students are in a personalized Acceleration class every day. This is dedicated time for students to work one-on-one with teachers, either to address gaps in foundational knowledge and practice core skills or to enrich learning and pursue individualized study of topics in greater depth. This time is completely personalized to meet the needs of each student.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

All Middle School students will have three 60-minute physical education classes per week. In addition, students may participate in our athletics program. A diverse range of athletic offerings will be available to students, including soccer, fencing, rock climbing, badminton, cross country, squash, table tennis, tennis, volleyball, basketball, track and field, personal fitness training and more.

RESIDENTIAL LIFE

Beginning in the eighth grade, students are eligible to take advantage of our residential life program. Our five- and seven-day boarding options give students the opportunity to immerse themselves fully within the culture of the school. They will have opportunities to develop deep relationships with their peers and the residential faculty through social activities during the evenings and weekends.