



**MIDDLE SCHOOL
CURRICULUM GUIDE
2019-20**

“As a member of the Princeton Day School community, I will pursue excellence in scholarship and character. I will try to be trustworthy, kind, honest and fair; give my best in and out of the classroom and on the playing field; be respectful of myself, of property and of all members of our community; take responsibility for my actions; maintain a sense of humor.”

Welcome to the Middle School at Princeton Day School, a lively and engaging place for students in Grades 5 through 8. Our goal is to create a culture where students feel safe, valued, celebrated and known.

The quote above is on a plaque in the Middle School, and it truly captures what we strive for here at Princeton Day School. In the Middle School at PDS, we encourage our students to be involved in activities both in and out of the classroom. We encourage them to take risks and value their own voice in the classroom. We believe in giving students opportunities to make mistakes, and then learn from them in a caring and supportive environment. In addition, we place great emphasis on keeping a growth mindset. We want students to view effort as the key to success; to keep focused on continued—life-long—growth; and to keep trying even though they may experience setbacks.

Class sizes are kept small, and teachers, students and parents work very closely together. Dedicated and talented faculty foster clear, thoughtful communication between home and school, forming a partnership that values educational excellence.

At Princeton Day School, we teach skills and knowledge, but also, more critically, we teach our students how to think and learn. Our Middle School teachers serve as role models and instill life skills, such as character, teamwork, creativity, ethics, resilience, curiosity, time management—all that is needed for a successful school career and, ultimately, a fulfilling life.

Please explore these pages and contact us if you have any questions. We would be delighted to speak to you and tell you more about the Middle School at Princeton Day School.

Sincerely,

Renée Charity Price and Assistant Head of School for Academic Life
Head of Middle School

Highlights of the Middle School Program:

Advisory Program: The Middle School advisory program nurtures students during the transformative time of early adolescence by providing them the tools necessary to ethically navigate and balance the diverse emotional, social and academic worlds in which they live.

Every student is matched with a faculty member who becomes their advisor for one school year. The advisee to advisor ratio is approximately 8:1. Students meet with their advisor and other students in their advisory group every morning and also in longer advisory sessions where character, balancing academics and extracurricular activities, stress management and other topics are explored. Advisors are a source of guidance and support and an excellent contact for parents.

Focus Assembly: Once each 7-day cycle, the entire Middle School gathers for a Focus Assembly featuring several 8th Grade students who deliver a Focus Speech about an important personal experience. From 5th Grade on, students know that one day, they'll have their turn. The students work closely with their English teacher and advisor to develop ideas and deliver poised, and often moving, speeches that bring the community together. Parents and family members often attend to hear these remarks. Announcements also occur at Focus so students stay informed, and Focus Notes are emailed to families so they can talk to their children about Middle School happenings.

Athletics: Our Middle School program promotes participation, providing interested students an interscholastic sports program appropriate for sixth, seventh and eighth graders. Our goals are to teach fundamental skills and strategies, develop a sense of team and to foster responsibility and commitment.

Fall

Girls: Cross Country, Field Hockey, Tennis, Soccer, Volleyball, Panther Fit, Sports & Activities

Boys: Cross Country, Soccer, Football (Middle School only), Panther Fit, Sports & Activities

Winter

Girls: Basketball, Ice Hockey, Fencing, Squash, Dance, Panther Fit, Sports & Activities

Boys: Basketball, Ice Hockey, Fencing, Squash, Dance, Panther Fit, Sports & Activities

Spring

Girls: Lacrosse, Softball, Skating, Track & Field (Middle School only), Panther Fit, Sports & Activities

Boys: Lacrosse, Baseball, Tennis, Skating, Track & Field (Middle School only), Panther Fit, Sports & Activities

Panther Fit: Panther Fit is for the student who wants to compete against themselves or improve their athletic performance during the “off-season.” Focusing on strength and endurance training, speed and agility, core strengthening and neuromuscular efficiency training, Panther Fit is for the student who wants to maximize their personal fitness and performance level, or improve their achievement level in a particular sport. Students will be immersed in an environment that allows them to set personal challenges and work towards meeting them in a supportive and collaborative environment. Games, challenges, events, and competitions keep this class engaging and fun, while allowing each student to personalize their goals. Panther Fit classes dismiss at 3:45 on days with athletics (excluding days 3 and 7).

Sports and Activities: Fall and Spring Session Sports and Activities are an engaging and enjoyable opportunity for students to maintain, and even increase, their physical activity and fitness level while also providing the opportunity to practice leadership and collaboration skills. Students will be engaged in outdoor cooperative and field games when the weather permits, but will also play badminton and paddle ball indoors to increase their eye-hand coordination and kinesthetic awareness. Less competitive than Panther Fit or team sports, Sports and Activities is a great way to have fun with peers and work together in a team-like atmosphere, while also challenging oneself to be more physically active and fit. Class will dismiss at 3:20.

Winter Session Sports and Activities is a great way to explore a passion for the outdoors and challenge yourself. Class will be held outside each day, even in harsh weather conditions, so students will have the chance to test their levels of endurance, while learning about important survival practices for wilderness exploration. Engaging in a variety of fun cooperative and field games, students will also have the opportunity to practice leadership and collaboration skills. Students will have the opportunity to explore the beautiful PDS campus and surroundings while hiking on the trails, learning about the principles of the “Leave no Trace” ethos.

Mini-Course Week: Every year in mid-February, daily coursework is set aside for a special, one-week interdisciplinary experience. Students choose from a menu of cultural, scientific and historical studies with courses such as the Amish Experience, Gettysburg, Chocolate Immersion, NY, NY and Top Chef. They spend the week in focused, experiential study, visiting museums, farms, research institutes and historical parks to learn firsthand about their subjects. Mini-Course Week is a signature Middle School program.

Da Vinci Program: The Da Vinci Program is a new and innovative program with courses on a wide range of subjects, including robotics, sustainability, coding and service learning, that aims

to engage students as the captains of their own learning. Each Middle School student will take courses that they choose in which they take risks, explore individual passions, develop new interests and use multiple disciplines to solve problems and create original solutions.

Computer Science: This year all students in Middle School will be introduced to Computer Science. Classes will meet during the Da Vinci period and each grade level will have the class for one quarter. This hands-on, interactive experience introduces learners to various aspects of computational thinking and computer programming while emphasizing the importance of critical analysis, quantitative reasoning and problem-solving. Students will assume the role of computer scientists as they explore foundational elements of programming and physical computing and adapt the block-based coding skills they developed in the Lower School to more complex text-based coding.

Bridges: The Bridges Program prepares our seventh graders for a successful and balanced experience transitioning from childhood to adolescence and young adulthood. By providing guidance and mentorship from trained student leaders from the senior class, middle schoolers will make connections, establish relationships and will be able to observe from their older peer leaders those behaviors that we believe to be important in the cultivation of the whole student.

As another aspect to the global health and wellness curriculum at the Princeton Day School, the Bridges program provides a safe and non-judgmental venue for discussion of topics important to youth today. It will serve as a platform for discussing such topics as: personal character, social responsibility and good decision making through the context of school community, social norms, family dynamics, peer pressure, the internet and social media, sexuality, relationships and substance abuse.

Bridges teams will meet during the Da Vinci period on Day 4 from September 2019 until the end of March 2020.

Activities: Students can choose from a range of additional activities such as Food and Garden Club, Spelling & Geography Bees, and Jazz Band.

Service Learning

Middle School students participate in projects that have been decided upon collectively by the division. Once the organization has been identified, time is devoted to learning about the organization and carrying through with solutions. Here are some examples of Community Service in the MS:

- Loaves and Fishes bagged lunch project; MS students gather together to make hundreds

of bagged lunches to benefit Trenton Area Soup Kitchen, an organization that feeds the hungry in the Trenton area

- Skating Party “Tickets” with proceeds donated to organizations
- Book drives to ensure books are in the hands of children who may not have access to them
- Bake sales and clothing drives proposed by individual students and student groups to help local organizations

Middle School Curriculum:

Health & Wellness:

The Middle School Health and Wellness program seeks to empower our students to successfully navigate the ever-changing environment we live in by promoting a healthy physical, mental and social lifestyle. Students in each grade level study a developmentally appropriate curriculum.

The curriculum revolves around a number of core topics: stress and study skills, sexuality, substance use and abuse, social media and sustainability.

Health educators, mental health personnel and fitness, yoga and movement instructors will work in conjunction with speakers from our greater community to share important information in their areas of expertise. The multimodal curriculum includes subjects such as the environment, nutrition and safety. It is our hope that providing students with this developmentally appropriate and clinically pertinent learning will inform their decision-making and provide the skills they need to build a productive and healthy foundation for living.

Physical Education:

Fifth Grade

All 5th Grade students participate in a comprehensive physical education program five classes out of each seven-day cycle. The goals of the program are: to encourage physical activity through the introduction of individual sports, team sports, and skating; to improve each individual's overall fitness level; and to have fun while encouraging cooperation and good sportsmanship.

Sixth to Eighth Grade

The Sixth through Eighth Grade physical education program is offered each season, and students participate in the course during the PE/Athletics period of the school day. Students engage in a variety of physical activities throughout the season that meet the needs of a range of skill and fitness levels. Key components of the programs include individual and team sports, cooperative games and fitness training. *See Sports and Activities and Panther Fit descriptions in Athletics for more information.*

Humanities:

Fifth Grade

Students examine the organizing question "What are the elements of culture?" by creating unique cultures in each Humanities class. These become part of a project-based archaeology experience in which students excavate and analyze the representative artifacts of each class's culture. This first-hand understanding is used to examine the civilizations of China, Greece and Rome,

continually comparing different cultures and searching for themes that connect the modern world to our ancient studies. Students are equally encouraged to experiment with multiple genres of writing, both as readers and writers.

Sixth Grade

Students examine world history from the fall of Roman civilization through Medieval Islam to the Renaissance. The organizing questions of the class are: "How do cultures interact with their environment?" and "How do people communicate their ideas and beliefs?" Students compare cultures and civilizations and analyze their influence upon contemporary ideas, customs, beliefs and institutions. They are also encouraged to experiment with multiple genres of writing, both as readers and writers.

English:

Students in Grades 7 and 8 work to strengthen reading, writing and public-speaking skills. In addition, students engage in regular grammar and vocabulary-building activities. Each course is built around an essential question.

In Seventh Grade students ask: "How do stories affect and change us?" The short story collections *Introducing the Short Story*, the novel, *Chains*, an extensive poetry unit and a year-end public speaking unit provide rich and engaging opportunities for students to find answers.

Eighth Grade students ask: "How does literature help us understand ourselves and others?" Through short stories, poems, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, a social justice project and a reading partnership unit, students are challenged to examine their own world in relation to the experiences of others.

Key Goals and Strategies:

Literature Assessment

- Daily discussion (both whole-class and small-group) to examine aspects of literature: plot, setting, character, symbolism, irony, theme, etc.
- Quizzes on reading
- A variety of written responses to texts: analytical essay, journal response, fictional story, personal essay
- Written responses to independent reading each term
- Focus on independent thinking, making connections between texts and life, note taking, listening and discussion skills
- Regular opportunity for revision of written work

Writing Goals

- Develop ability to communicate effectively in essays, poetry, narrative, etc.
- Develop ability to respond thoughtfully in writing to literature and life situations
- Refine and deepen use of sophisticated writing techniques: analogies, figurative language, vivid imagery, etc.
- Opportunities to publish writing in literary contests outside of school curriculum

Writing Genres

- Formal writing to include original short story, poetry, memoir, expository essay and personal essay
- Emphasis on writing process: drafts, conferences, revision and editing
- Informal writing in response to or preparation for reading and discussion
- Writer's Notebook: reflective pieces, "seed" pieces for development, responses to literature, connections to own experiences

Poetry

- Integrated into literature units
- Developing sophistication of figurative language: metaphor, images, etc.
- Refinement of listening skills through frequent reading aloud of student poems
- Student poetry lessons throughout the year, based on the PDS Garden, outdoor spaces, and Imagine the Possibilities poets

Speech

- Frequent reading aloud in class, enactment of drama and narrative when appropriate
- Oral presentations with emphasis on speaking and presentation skills
- Increasing sophistication in class discussion skills and analysis
- Extensive storytelling and public-speaking instruction and practice in Grade 7

Vocabulary

- Literature-based lists with quizzes to assess knowledge of meaning, spelling, usage
- Graphic organizers to increase connections to specific words
- Literature terminology: plot, character, conflict, theme, climax, denouement, irony, etc.
- Revision of written work for accurate, appropriate vocabulary

Mechanics

- **Spelling**
 - Literature-generated lists; spelling rules reviewed, strategies implemented as needed
- **Grammar**

- o Goal of transferring underpinnings of grammar and structure to aid in writing; mechanics assessment of each writing piece
- o Review of parts of speech and structure of sentences
- o Periodic quizzes: parts of speech, parts of sentence

History:

This two-year course examines the history of the United States with the purpose of teaching students the historical narrative, perceptions of national identity and the importance of a citizen's role in a democratic society. Academic skills taught are: close reading, historical research, analysis and evaluation of evidence, thesis-based writing and oral presentation and argument. Life skills emphasized are: collaboration, empathy, development of a growth mindset, and executive function (planning, organizing, responsibility).

In Grade Seven the content encompasses the growth of the U.S. from European exploration through Reconstruction.

In Grade Eight we examine the U.S. during the 20th century, and supplement our study with an examination of the rise of totalitarianism and its impact upon society.

Middle School history ends with a major capstone research paper, which requires the students to utilize the research, organization and writing skills they have learned throughout the year.

Mathematics:

For more information on our math course pathways for students in grades 5-12, please see our website, under curriculum.

Fifth Grade

The emphasis of the Fifth Grade course is on numerical reasoning, where whole number, decimal and fraction concepts and computations are learned. In preparation for the following year's pre-algebra course, students are introduced to the order of operations, simple equation-solving and the use of variables. Measurement and geometry are also studied as students find the area and perimeter of various polygons. Throughout the course, problem-solving strategies are expanded and practiced and the students frequently apply ideas of mathematics to the science program.

Resources:

- Prentice Hall *Mathematics Course 1*
- Supplemental materials for enrichment
- State and national mathematics competitions

Key Goals for Students:

- To review and increase mastery of arithmetic processes using whole numbers, decimals and fractions
- To receive an introduction to basic geometric ideas and employ measurement skills
- To build a background of information and experiences to prepare for future math study
- To improve math literacy
- To develop confidence and proficiency applying effective problem-solving strategies

Sixth Grade**Pre-Algebra 6**

The Sixth Grade Pre-Algebra program introduces topics that lay the groundwork for future algebraic studies as well as revisiting topics seen in previous years of math class with more depth and sophistication. Students focus more on algebraic and geometric modeling as well as learn more advanced computation with negative numbers and powers. Our program successfully prepares students to start their formal study of Algebra in 7th Grade, at which time all students begin a two-year program and complete Algebra 1 by the end of 8th Grade. Our goal is to provide a rich experience that provides our students the best opportunity to gain a strong understanding of and appreciation for the material. We will cover a wide range of topics including: positive and negative numbers, basic solving equations, number theory, rational numbers, ratio and proportion, percents and two and three dimensional geometry.

Resources:

- Prentice Hall *Mathematics Course 2*
- Supplemental materials for enrichment
- State and national mathematics competitions
- Honors: *Discovering Mathematics*; Singapore Math Program

Key Goals for Students:

- To gain useful familiarity with vocabulary and concepts of algebraic and proportional reasoning
- To review and increase mastery of arithmetic processes using fractions, decimals and integers
- To experience a substantial preview of geometric ideas and apply equation-solving techniques to geometric objects in two and three dimensions
- To build a background of information and experiences to prepare for future math study
- To gain an understanding and appreciation of math's place in the world by constant word problems and teaching methods designed to see how the numbers play out in real world situations

- To use the calculator appropriately

Seventh and Eighth Grade

Algebra

This comprehensive two-year Algebra I course covers all the traditional Algebra I topics in depth and is supplemented by special units, developed by PDS faculty, which extend and enrich these topics and which provide a challenging review of arithmetic processes. Extending the Algebra I course time frame to two years enables the students to engage in mathematically rich investigations to build deep understandings and ensures that topics are aligned appropriately to the student's cognitive development. The result is a richer course of study in Algebra and a level of understanding that has served our students well as they have progressed in the study of higher levels of math and science.

Resources:

- *Algebra I*, Holt McDougal
- Graphing calculators
- Supplemental materials for enrichment and review
- State and national mathematics competitions
- Honors: *Algebra I*: McGraw-Hill

Key Goals for Students

- To gain a thorough understanding and mastery of the processes for solving and modeling solutions of linear and quadratic sentences (equations and inequalities) and systems of sentences
- To gain an appreciation of the relevance and importance of algebra in the real world and learn how and when to apply algebraic skills to investigate real-life situations
- To use graphing calculators appropriately
- To gain familiarity and basic manipulative skills with matrices, exponential expressions and equations, polynomials, functions and quadratic and rational equations
- To build a background of information and experiences to prepare for future study in the areas of Geometry, Calculus and Statistics
- To review and extend skills with arithmetic processes

Computer:

Fifth and Sixth Grade

The Middle School has a 1:1 iPad program that is integrated throughout all classes in the division (for more information, please see our [webpage](#) on the iPad program in the Middle School). For this course, basic hardware operations and software skills are emphasized. Classes promote

creative writing using word processing software, and problem solving using data-analysis software. Students also investigate research and networking options via the Internet. Students further use iPads to create content and collaborate with their peers both in class and at home.

Science:

Fifth Grade

Fifth grade science begins with an investigation into the questions “How do I think?” and “How do I learn?” Making use of the PDS garden, greenhouse and the scientific method, students will explore the ways they send information to their brain through their senses and compare those processes to how plants experience the world. The focus will then shift to animal cognition and the students will complete an inquiry-based research project to gather evidence of animal thinking and present their findings in infographic form created using Canva.com. Finally, students will explore artificial intelligence and the question "Do computers think?" They will use micro:bits and block coding during this part of the unit, ending with designing their own code and building a magic eight ball.

The second unit starts by widening their view to see how they can affect the world around them, answering the question “How can I use my thoughts and actions to make a positive impact on the world around me?” Students will review the fundamentals of electric current, the law of conservation of energy, and the constraints of our world’s resources. Taking on the eye of social entrepreneurs and inspired by local New Jersey business, TerraCycle, students will inventory their own trash to find objects they can prototype into a new usable product.

Fifth grade science ends the year by hosting a Design a Difference Fair. After reading several non-fiction works about real-world problems surrounding waste and energy use, students will be challenged to choose a problem and design a solution by following the engineering design process.

Sixth Grade

In this life science course, students will explore the science of living organisms and their relationships with one another and also the environment. Using the scientific method and inquiry-based learning, our young scientists will begin the year by investigating the diversity of life and evolution. Afterwards, an examination of biological cells will ensue, with a special focus on microscope usage. Then students will learn how cells are organized into various body systems in humans, in animals, and also in plants. Through these units, teachers will find ways to make connections between concepts learned in class and the real-life applications of our PDS garden. Finally, students will study the ecological relationships that bind all living things to the environment and we will make sense of how to transform our world into a more sustainable place. Much of the project-based learning that will happen in this course centers around design thinking and technology-based engineering.

Seventh Grade

Through this earth and space science course, seventh graders will learn to see the earth as a dynamic system. In particular, the content includes topics in astronomy, geology, natural disasters, oceanography, meteorology and the origin and evolution of the universe. With a particular focus on data, students will practice utilizing their analytical skills to draw general conclusions based on empirical observations. Connections will be made to the physical properties of land and water, as well as to the mathematical understanding of coordinate graphs and slope. In addition, students will discover the relevance of earth science to their local PDS context, seeking to answer the important question of how a deeper understanding of these earth science concepts make people better stewards of the globe. Finally, students will be given opportunities to incorporate technological and engineering skills into projects that will manifest their scientific learning.

Eighth Grade

In this introduction to the physical sciences, eighth graders will venture into the science of investigating matter, namely chemistry and physics. Every unit is rooted in a student-driven lab experience, in which data is collected and observations lead to the construction of theory. We begin the year by reviewing mass, density and volume and very soon, we begin to explore the nature of atoms and molecules, both from the perspective of the periodic table and also from the vantage point of chemical bonding. After a brief survey of various types of chemical reactions, our students zoom out towards larger material objects and describe their motion. We will slowly review the three basic laws of Newtonian physics, as well as momentum and impulse, using experimental testing as our basis. Finally, the year will culminate with an engineering design project, for which we will enlist our understanding of forces and acceleration in order to undertake an egg-crash car project.

Languages:

Foreign language study broadens and intensifies in Middle School. Fifth graders choose either French or Spanish. In 6th grade, students continue to study French or Spanish, and they are also introduced to Latin during the first four weeks of school. The goal is twofold: to reinforce their command of grammar through the presentation of basic concepts of Latin grammar (which will be useful for their grammar acquisition in English, French or Spanish); and to introduce them to a language that they can choose to study full time in 7th grade. In seventh and eighth grade, students focus on one language exclusively, studying Latin, French or Spanish. Each year the language department successfully integrates students new to PDS at each grade level.

Spanish 1

The course begins with a quick introduction to the most basic aspects of the Spanish language.

We read a short story that introduces new grammar and vocabulary within each unit. Topics include: family, colors, clothing, school, nationalities, physical description and weather (among others). Students study sentence structure and learn how verbs are conjugated in Spanish. One of the main goals for Level One is for the students to reach a mastery of the present tense. Additionally, students study the concept of noun genders and adjective agreement, and are introduced to the present progressive. They practice asking questions and expressing their likes and dislikes using the verb *gustar*. In Level One Spanish, there is an emphasis on Spanish culture and students learn about various aspects of daily life in Spain. Spanish One is an immersion-based course, meaning there is little to no use of English. Towards the end of the year, students should be moderately conversational.

Spanish 2

In Spanish 2, students expand their vocabulary range to include animals, food, places in the city, activities and classroom material. This level focuses on the culture of Mexico. Mastery of the interrogatives is stressed, so that participants can have question and answer exchanges that flow in a variety of directions; teacher to student, student to student and student to teacher. Grammar topics emphasize identifying parts of speech, the formality and plurality of subject pronouns, continued practice of present tense conjugations, the use of near future, the formation of commands and the identification and use of direct, indirect, reflexive and reciprocal pronouns.

Spanish 3

Spanish 3 is an immersion course that recycles the material learned in Spanish 1 and 2, while introducing new grammatical structures through the study of the clash of cultures between the “old” (Spain) and “new” (Central and South America) worlds. In class, we build upon the four basic skills (speaking, listening, writing and reading) of the previous courses, and move on to mid-proficiency level in these areas. Students are expected to stay in the target language and are introduced to the present perfect, preterit and imperfect tenses. The culture and civilization of the Spanish-speaking world are essential components of this course: we watch videos, listen to and learn songs, and study Hispanic history and geography. Making connections between our life experiences and the Spanish-speaking world is also an important component of the course. Group and pair work in the classroom are essential to acquire new concepts and improve oral skills.

Spanish 4

The highest level of Spanish in our Middle School starts with a quick review of the main grammar points and verb tenses studied in previous years: present, reflexive verbs, commands, present perfect, preterit and imperfect. The class is conducted entirely in Spanish, and students are expected to stay in the target language for the entire class period as they continue to develop their language skills through research, oral presentations, readings, story writing, documentaries,

music, and even a soap opera! All the oral and written materials used in the class are authentic and guide students through an exploration of important cultural topics relevant to the Hispanic world. The future and the conditional tenses, as well as an introduction to the subjunctive mood, are presented in this course and applied in meaningful contexts. Placement for the Upper School is done in the spring and depends on each student's command of the language.

French 1

Students learn to communicate using everyday vocabulary, elementary grammar, and basic syntax. Through individual, paired, and group exercises, we encourage students to express themselves in typical situations and everyday activities. Students are involved in meaningful interactions from the start. Topics include, among others: everyday classroom interaction, the family, pastimes and telling time. Students learn conjugation in the present tense with regular as well as irregular verbs, concept of noun gender, and adjective agreement. Since culture is an essential component of the curriculum, students are exposed to short readings and activities infused with cultural aspects of both the French and Francophone worlds.

French 2

Students expand their knowledge of vocabulary, verb tenses (the future tense *futur proche* and a quick introduction to the past tense *passé composé* with *avoir*), the imperative mood and general communication. Topics include, among others: school schedules, pastimes, places, the weather and food. The emphasis is on advancing and integrating listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. Students read a short story to enrich the full immersion in the French language. Projects link students' interests with aspects of contemporary French and francophone cultures. A film and songs reinforce essential vocabulary, cultural knowledge, and listening comprehension.

French 3

Students continue to expand their knowledge of vocabulary, grammatical structures of intermediate difficulty (such as the past tense *passé composé* with *être* and *avoir*, expressing quantity and using partitive articles), and general communication about clothing, shopping, housing and the cityscape. The emphasis is on advancing and integrating listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. Students read short authentic texts and perform skits and songs. Projects linking students' interests with aspects of contemporary French and francophone cultures allow them to practice researching information online. Films, songs, and other media reinforce vocabulary, linguistic structures, cultural knowledge, and listening comprehension.

French 4

Students continue to expand their knowledge of vocabulary, grammatical structures of intermediate difficulty (the two past tenses *imparfait* and *passé composé*, object pronouns, reflexive and pronominal verbs), and general communication about travel, holidays, details of

daily life at home and school, food shopping and cooking. The emphasis is on advancing and integrating listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. Students read more authentic texts, and are asked to write narratives with past tenses and speak extemporaneously. Projects and media are used as in French 3 but at higher levels of sophistication. French 4 allows students to prepare for a transition into Upper School French II or III. Placement for the Upper School is done in the spring and depends on each student's command of the language.

6th grade – Latin Component

Students are introduced to the basic foundations of Latin as they spend some time making connections to their chosen Romance language. Students also get a taste of the daily life of the ancient Pompeians prior to the eruption of Mount Vesuvius.

Latin 1

This class focuses on the foundations of Latin grammar, vocabulary, and structure. Using Unit 1 of the Cambridge Latin series, students follow the Caecili family in ancient Pompeii, just before the eruption of Mt. Vesuvius. In Unit 2, they explore the worlds of Roman Britain and ancient Alexandria. The class fully grasps the daily lives of these ancient people and learns to appreciate their influence on our modern world. Through daily translation and immersion in reading Latin, students focus on the first three declensions of nouns and the indicative active system of verbs. Students are also introduced to adjectives, adverbs, and pronouns. Finally, students make vast connections to English vocabulary through Latin root words.

Latin 2

This class aims to broaden the students' foundations beyond the basics of Latin. After finishing up Unit 2 of the Cambridge Latin series, students complete their learning of the five declensions of nouns and the indicative mood of verbs. Through daily translations, students continue to learn about the lives of the ancients, focusing on medicine, superstitions, holidays, and mythology. Students learn about the earliest foundations of Rome, the ancient kings, and strive to understand the transition to Empire and Republic. Further connections are made to various Romance languages and English vocabulary.

Performing Arts

Theater

The study of Theater Arts is introduced in Middle School. All Middle School students experience Theater class for one term during each of their four years. Classes are process oriented, geared toward affording the development of confidence, flexibility, adventurousness, and collaboration. Performance opportunities include in-class performances, the Eighth Grade Fall Play, various Da Vinci courses for seventh graders, and the Eighth Grade Musical, a class project produced each Spring.

Fifth Grade

This course introduces students to the study of theater arts. Using storytelling, mime, movement activities, and guided improvisation, the course offers students experiences in the realm of imagination and creativity. It provides the foundation for further study in the development of the language of theater, and establishes the environment particular to the theater classroom. This course gives a general overview of theater, covering both performance and playwriting.

Sixth Grade

In the sixth grade course we focus on communication and collaboration through activities involving creative choices for physical movement and verbalization. This course is an introductory acting course. We begin to explore acting and creating characters using scripts, learning how an actor approaches a role and develops it for performance. Students build confidence in their public speaking abilities, learn to memorize and perform short scenes, and dive into the various aspects of staging a scene.

Seventh Grade

The seventh grade course is an introduction to technical theater and design. Students begin the course by studying movement and physical theatre as it relates to directing, staging, and design choices. Students learn how to create the physical world a play lives in, while exploring the fundamentals of design components such as costumes, props, lighting, sound, and scenery.

Eighth Grade Theater Electives

Theater: 8th Notes/Fall Play (Fall Semester Only)

The 8th Notes and the Fall Play have combined into an exciting and dynamic performance course that covers all the basics of acting and singing for a NEW Fall Performing Arts Elective. Students will continue to meet to develop a variety of choral repertoire, ranging from simple madrigals to complicated a capella tunes. As a select ensemble, these students will continue to perform at various school events. In addition, this class will work on acting techniques; and will form the company that will produce the Middle School Fall Play. At the end of the semester, a Musical Theater Auditioning unit will help prepare students for the 8th Grade Spring Musical audition process.

Eighth Grade Musical (co-curricular)

Each spring semester, all 8th grade students launch a full-scale musical production. A culminating experience for the class, the 8th Grade Musical is a long-standing PDS tradition. Students may act, sing, dance, serve on the tech crew, or perform in the pit orchestra. Students interested in being featured onstage in the show may audition in December for the Eighth Grade Musical Elective Course, where they will spend their second semester learning music, choreography, staging, and character development.

Dance

Sixth Grade

“If you can walk you can dance” is the motto for sixth grade dance so that all students can participate no matter the level of ability. In this class, we look at dance through a broader global lens than is offered in most dance studios outside of PDS. Students will learn the basic movement building blocks for creating their own dances to prepare them for higher levels of dance making. They will also learn dances of a variety of cultures such as Native American hoop dancing, social dances from India and “working” dances from Africa, as well as put them into a larger context of how these dances connect to a global community. For those most enthusiastic about getting up on stage, a performance opportunity will be held in the spring.

Music

The Middle School Music program builds upon the foundations established in Lower School, but helps prepare students for more specialized programs as they mature.

Throughout their Middle School careers, students explore improvisation and composition, musical form and design, and develop sight-reading skills in their general music classes. Choir, Orchestra and Band are also an integral part of the program, and all students in the fifth and sixth grades are required to participate in one of the ensembles. Seventh and Eighth grade students can also participate in the advanced ensembles. Private individual lessons are available for an additional fee (please see description below).

General Music

The Middle School general music course curriculum is designed to have students experience music in a way that is different from how they approach it in the performing ensembles. In the ensembles, students address the discipline of learning an instrument or using their voice. They focus on executing their parts as they prepare for a concert. The prime creative force is the composer while the ensemble is tasked with interpreting and performing the composer’s work. The general music classes counterweight the ensembles by having the students assume the role of composer and improviser. The main emphasis is on student creation and discovery.

Fifth Grade

Fifth grade students explore the “what” and “how” of music. Students learn rhythm, melody and harmony. These core foundations of music are explored through movement, playing instruments (Arabic and African percussion, boomwhackers and xylophones), active listening lessons, Noteflight composition software and a plethora of games and competitions to reinforce what is taught.

Sixth Grade

The 6th grade music class uses percussion and ukuleles as performance and composition tools. Students experience these instruments in both individual and group settings. The main goal is for the students to develop an understanding of theoretical music concepts and structures. Through the use of audiation, students are able to internally conceive their own musical ideas and bring them to light on the instruments. Class instruction is accomplished by giving the students a fundamental framework upon which they build their own ideas. They also analyze the works of major composers and performers to find inspiration for their own work. Students perform their works individually and in groups.

Seventh Grade

Music technology is the primary focus of the seventh grade class. Students use the iPad and the app GarageBand as their primary means to create music. They also spend the majority of their time in the MIDI computer lab where they get to hook up their iPad to hardware such as MIDI controllers. They learn the fundamental building blocks of popular music such as beat, chord progression, bass line, and melody. They use these components to arrange familiar pieces and also compose their own originals.

Eighth Grade Music Electives

8th Notes/Fall Play (Fall Semester only)

The 8th Notes and the Middle School Fall Play have combined into an exciting and dynamic performance course that covers all the basics of acting and singing for a NEW Fall Performing Arts Elective. Students will continue to meet to develop a variety of choral repertoire, ranging from simple madrigals to complicated a capella tunes. As a select ensemble, these students will continue to perform at various school events. In addition, this class will work on acting techniques and will form the company that will produce the Middle School Fall Play. At the end of the semester, a Musical Theater Auditioning unit will help prepare students for the 8th Grade Spring Musical audition process.

Eighth Grade Musical (co-curricular)

Each spring semester, all 8th grade students launch a full-scale musical production. A culminating experience for the class, the 8th Grade Musical is a long-standing PDS tradition. Students may act, sing, dance, serve on the tech crew, or perform in the pit orchestra. Students interested in being featured onstage in the show may audition in December for the Eighth Grade Musical Elective Course, where they will spend their second semester learning music, choreography, staging, and character development.

DJ and Film Music (Offered 2nd Semester Only)

This course is an extension of the concepts of music composition learned in the 7th grade music technology class. Students will have the opportunity to create their own music on software and equipment used by professional artists and producers. We will primarily focus on how DJ's and film composers create their pieces. Projects will include creating loop based pieces with Ableton Live software and Launchpad hardware and also composing soundtracks to film scenes.

Concert Ensembles

The Middle School offers many opportunities for students to perform in an ensemble. Whether you are a straight out beginner or an advanced player, we have a place for you. There are multiple choirs, orchestras, and bands to suit the needs of every student. Fifth and Sixth grade students are required to be a member of an ensemble of their choice. Seventh and Eighth grade students can elect to be in one of the advanced ensembles.

Concert Choir

Concert Choir provides fifth and sixth grade students a chance to sing in a choral ensemble. Students are introduced to Folk music from a wide variety of cultures, and sing in many languages, genres and styles. Students start the year singing in unison and in canon, and end the year singing in two or more parts. Choir members begin to sight sing, and are asked to analyze the music they perform. This choir meets three days each cycle and performs throughout the school year.

Chorale

Chorale provides seventh and eighth grade students a chance to sing in a choral ensemble. Students continue to sing Folk music from a variety of cultures, and sing in many languages, genres and styles. As they engage with more challenging repertoire, sight reading increases with difficulty and students are asked to take on more responsibility for their learning. Repertoire is generally sung in three or more voice parts. This choir meets three days each cycle and performs throughout the school year.

Discovery Band

Discovery Band is the perfect ensemble for fifth and sixth grade students with no previous study on a woodwind, brass or percussion instrument. Instruments offered are Flute, Clarinet, Saxophone, Trumpet, Trombone, Baritone, and Percussion. The class meets three times per cycle in which students rehearse as a full ensemble and also receive sectional instruction. Students present at least two concerts during the year.

Expedition Band

Expedition Band is an intermediate ensemble for the advanced fifth and sixth grade student with at least one year of experience on a woodwind, brass, or percussion instrument. The class meets

three times per cycle in which students rehearse as a full ensemble and also receive sectional instruction. Students perform in at least two evening concerts and participate in school assemblies throughout the school year.

Odyssey Band

Odyssey Band is an advanced ensemble for the seventh and eighth grade student with at least two or more years of experience on a woodwind, brass, or percussion instrument. The class meets three times per cycle in which students rehearse as a full ensemble and also receive sectional instruction. Students perform in at least two evening concerts and participate in school assemblies throughout the school year.

Allegro Strings

Allegro Strings is a small group of dedicated students who wish to begin learning the Violin, Viola, Cello or Bass. The class meets three times per cycle and is available to all fifth and sixth grade students. Students participate in at least two concerts during the school year.

Sinfonia

Sinfonia is an ensemble made up of students with prior experience on the Violin, Viola, Cello or Bass who want to perform in a large ensemble and continue to develop their playing technique. The class meets three times per cycle in two sections - a 5th/6th section and a 7th/8th section. Students perform in at least two evening concerts and participate in school assemblies throughout the school year.

Extra-curricular Opportunities:

Jazz Band

This extra-curricular ensemble is open to interested students in grades 6-8 who have studied their instrument for at least one year. Students must participate in the curricular band, choir, or orchestra classes to be eligible. This ensemble meets after school one day per week throughout the school year.

Chamber Players

Chamber Players is an ensemble for advanced string students of the Middle School. They rehearse before school once a week. Students perform two concerts per year and participate in the 8th grade graduation ceremony.

Private Lessons

Princeton Day School has an outstanding adjunct music faculty available to students for private lessons. Lessons are scheduled once a week at a mutually convenient time for student and teacher. Lessons are available for the following instruments: piano, voice, guitar, all string,

woodwind, brass and percussion instruments. Rates and policies for private music lessons are found in the FAQ and Private Lesson Contract. If you have any questions, please contact Tomasz Rzeczycki.

Visual Arts: Supporting Emerging Artists

Grades 5-8

Middle School curriculum engages students in ways that show them they're capable of more than they know. Adolescents are often quick to say they are or are not good at something, as though it were a natural talent. Here we show students that skill comes as the result of practice, and with practice anyone can become good at any art form.

Middle schoolers explore color, form, texture, line & shape through various media and projects. Visual and design thinking strategies are strengthened. Artwork and art history related to ethnic traditions outside of Western European art, public service & human rights, families & cultural confluence, symbolism & portraiture.

Fifth Grade

Art

A broad understanding of multiple cultures allows students to connect in new ways to the foundations and principles of art (line, color, shape, form, texture, and space). Fifth graders will be asked the essential question, “How are the elements of art found in ethnic traditions outside Western European art?”

Engineering and Design

In this class, the concept and process of Engineering Design is applied to a variety of Design Challenge Projects. Students collaborate in groups in an interdisciplinary approach as researchers, engineers, and artists to develop solutions and develop basic construction skills. Projects include a catapult toss, a Pinewood Derby dash, and a bridge-buster competition.

Sixth Grade

Art

Culture affects an artist's work by shaping the worldview of the artist and associations they may have with color, shape, pattern, symbol, people, places, and things. For the emerging artist, this means the message they convey in their artwork is through their own cultural language of symbolism. The sixth grade essential question is, “How is an artist’s work influenced by the culture and time in which he or she lives?”

Engineering and Design

Design Challenge 6

In this class, students research natural disasters, including hurricanes, tornados, earthquakes, tsunamis, and volcanic eruptions. We seek to understand how such natural disasters occur, how they impact people and communities around the world, and how we might anticipate and protect ourselves from their devastating effects. Finally, to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding, students assume the roles of investigative journalist, scientist, reporter, and graphic designer to write, film, edit, and produce their own news broadcast on a natural disaster event of their choosing.

Seventh Grade

Art

Culture affects an artist's work by shaping the worldview of the artist and associations they may have with color, shape, pattern, symbol, people, places, and things. For the emerging artist, this means the message they convey in their artwork is done through their own cultural language of symbolism. The seventh grade essential question is, "How is an artist's work influenced by culture, and how is it brought into 3-D forms?"

Engineering and Design

In this introduction to Adobe Illustrator, students discover the tools that help them create high-quality illustrations, logos, and other custom artwork. This class is an introduction to the workspace, tools for creating shapes, and additional options for adding color and text. Students will also learn how to convert vector artwork into tool paths for CNC laser cutting, converting 2D linework into 3D objects.

Eighth Grade Electives

Architecture

The 8th grade Architecture elective is an intensive course in design. Students' skills in construction, print reading skills, scale, and proportion are developed throughout the term. Once the students have grasped these skills, they begin to explore and create models of their own design. A final project is required. It will end with a model including their structure on a plot of land fully landscaped.

Ceramics

This course is an introduction to designing and building three-dimensional forms with clay. Time will be spent working on a variety of hand-building projects as well as working with the potter's wheel. By studying historical and contemporary work, the students will begin to discriminate between aesthetic value and personal preference in their own work, and the work of

their fellow students. A variety of ceramic surface design approaches will address the relationship between a two dimensional composition and a three dimensional form.

Drawing and Painting: The Self-Portrait (Fall)

Students will create a realistic self-portrait in graphite and incorporate a pop art style background into their work. Students will examine the style of Roy Lichtenstein, Yayoi Kusama, and Takashi Murakami to create *electric* versions of themselves. Students will also visit a museum to explore portraits from various artists and time periods. A field trip to one of several prominent galleries rounds out the elective experience.

Drawing and Painting: Still Life (Spring)

Students learn the relationship between food and art from Philadelphia’s top chefs to food-inspired still life masterpieces. The “Art of The Meal” program has the students study food-themed still life masterpieces and imagery in cookbooks. The class then visits Philadelphia restaurants where they meet with each chef, are served the chef’s signature dish for lunch and then sketch their own still life of a table set with the dishes—some so intricate they are prepared with tweezers. Students will spend the spring semester drawing and painting their own interpretation of their Chef’s signature dish still life. The restaurant selection is yet to be determined.

Intro to Web Development

In this course, students will explore the basics of HTML and CSS. Merging their newfound programming knowledge and skills with 8th grade themes of *Character* and *Identity* to better understand how their sense of self can be creatively expressed through the web, students will construct a personal website. In addition to applying the building blocks of programming and learning how to problem solve in this new language, students will take a critical view of web-based content, evaluating how and what people and organizations choose to portray about themselves online.

Photography

The eighth-grade photography elective is designed to introduce students to digital cameras and fine art printing techniques. Students will initially learn how to control their cameras through f-stop, shutter speed and ISO. Once these skills are mastered, students will learn to edit and process their digital files into presentation prints. As part of the process, other techniques will be explored, such as composition and approaching people. Examples from the colorful history of photography will be used to illustrate what the students are trying to accomplish. The successful student will leave the course with a broad understanding of photographic techniques and a historical perspective of the photographic medium. (Enrollment is limited to 10 students)

Woodworking and Design

This class will refine students' knowledge of classical woodworking techniques and furniture design. We will explore form vs. function, positive/negative space and spatial relationships. Students will design their own pieces of furniture and learn the fundamentals of ergonomics and composition. Over the duration of the course, students will complete 2-3 major projects.

Grading:

PDS considers grades and comments to be formative and a useful tool for student growth and development. In line with this thinking, students will receive an indication of their grade status at each Semester midpoint. In addition, teachers will prepare a two-part checklist at the end of each semester. The first section of the checklist consists of skills, such as class preparation and homework completion, designed to give the specific feedback that helps children learn how to become better students. The second section is similar, but contains items specific to each department, such as vocal fluency in language or computational accuracy in math. Written narratives about student progress are prepared by teachers at the end of the first semester and at midterm of the second semester in order that students may use them to further their work in each class.

Fifth and sixth grade students receive three levels of achievement grades:

Satisfactory (S) 80-100%

Needs Improvement (N) 70-79%

Unsatisfactory (U) 69% and Below

Parents are notified as soon as possible, usually in the form of a written interim report, if the teacher expects that a student will receive a Needs Improvement or Unsatisfactory grade. When a fifth or sixth grade student receives two or more Unsatisfactory grades during a given trimester, it is viewed as an indication that the overall quality of the student's work is insufficient, and the student may be placed on academic probation depending on the situation.

Seventh and eighth grade students receive the traditional letter achievement grades as follows:

A+ 98-100%

A 93-97%

A- 90-92%

B+ 87-89%

B 83-86%

B- 80-82%

C+ 77-79%

C 73-76%

C- 70-72%
D+ 67-69%
D 63-66%
D- 60-62%
F 0-59%

Parents are notified as soon as possible, usually in the form of a written interim report, if the teacher expects that a student will receive a grade below 80%/C+ or below. When a seventh or eighth grade student receives two grades of D+, D, or D-, or one grade of F during a given trimester, it is viewed as an indication that the overall quality of the student's work is insufficient, and the student is usually placed on academic probation.

NOTES: