



MIDDLE SCHOOL

AT A GLANCE

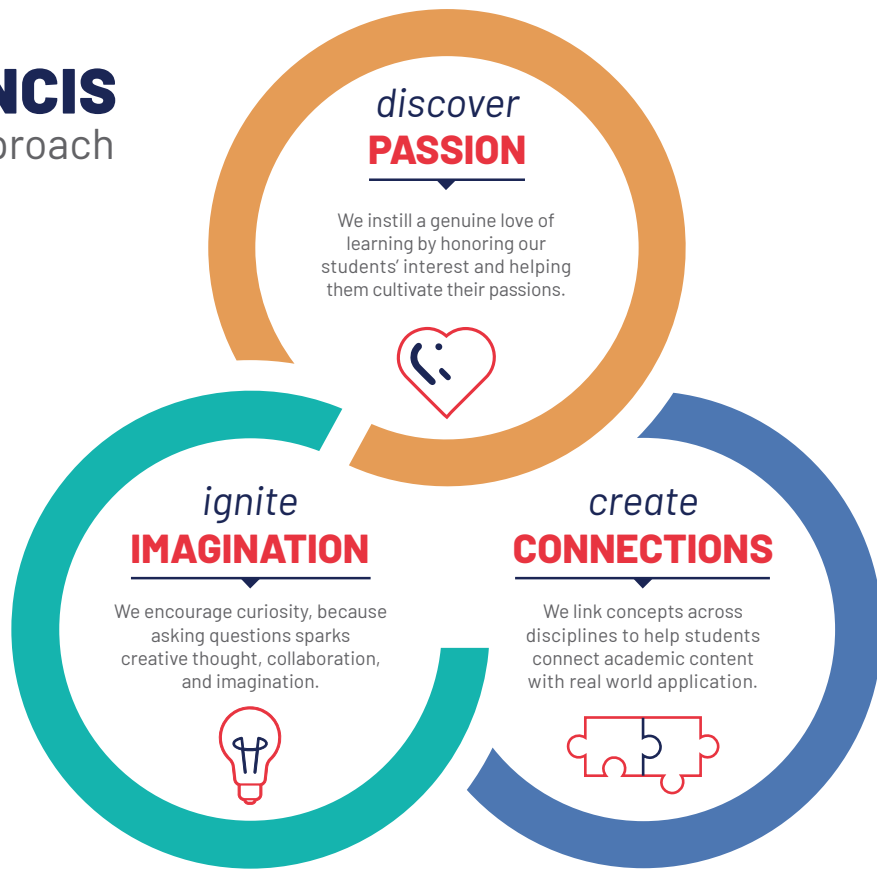


St. Francis Episcopal Middle School builds on the academic, social, physical, and spiritual foundations laid in our Primary and Lower Schools to ensure development of the whole child. Middle School is a time of significant personal and academic growth—and with a focus on Mind, Brain, and Education Science—our faculty works with students in their quest for independence and agency by encouraging increased responsibility and setting high expectations in a supportive environment.

2021-22 CORE CURRICULUM HIGHLIGHTS

THE ST. FRANCIS

P.I.C. Approach



ADVISORY

The advisory program is an essential element of the Middle School experience. Advisory is designed to support the needs of our students, families, faculty, and administration. The program also ensures that every student has the opportunity to form meaningful relationships with adults and peers. Advisory meetings are structured to encourage self-reflection, growth, and involvement in community-wide activities that promote school culture.

MIDDLE SCHOOL CHAPEL

Educating a child's spirit is as important to us as challenging the mind, and we strongly value our Episcopal identity. We are privileged to worship together as an entire Middle School community every other day.

SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL, AND ACADEMIC LEARNING (SEAL) APPROACH

This research-based approach to teaching focuses on the strong link between social-emotional skills and academic, personal, and civic success. Integrating SEAL into the St. Francis curriculum helps students develop four core competencies: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship skills.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND ATHLETICS

Students attend regular physical education class and enjoy a variety of activities that emphasize the values of health-related fitness. In addition, sixth, seventh, and eighth grade students are eligible to participate in St. Francis athletics. Our Middle School teams have a no-cut policy and we welcome all experience levels. Students may sign up for three sports a year—one each in the fall, winter, and spring.

FINE ARTS AND TECHNOLOGY

From art and drama to music and dance, students are offered many paths to explore their creative talents. Students can also sharpen their technical expertise through classes focused on computer programming, technical theatre, and robotics.

2021–22 CORE CURRICULUM HIGHLIGHTS

Through project-based learning, our Middle School faculty encourages students to inquire deeply and think creatively as they solve relevant problems and answer meaningful questions.

FIFTH GRADE



ENGLISH

- Reading deeply across genres to understand character motivation, theme, perspective, and author's purpose, while also developing a genuine love of reading
- Writing to empower, entertain, explain, and create connections with others in our world
- Exploring more sophisticated language and language structures through integrated spelling, vocabulary, and grammar



HISTORY

- Examining the past through investigations of primary sources and inquiry-based research focused on early American history
- Understanding world and U.S. geography and its role in shaping historical events
- Sharing of ideas through collaborative book clubs, research groups, and celebrations of learning



MATH

- Reading, writing, ordering, and comparing numbers from thousandths through billions
- Writing numbers using prime factorization
- Identifying the Lowest Common Multiple and Greatest Common Factor of a set of numbers
- Distinguishing between prime and composite numbers
- Explaining the reasonableness of an answer
- Performing operations on rational numbers
- Comparing, ordering, and converting fractions, decimals, and percentages
- Identifying equivalent fractions
- Finding sales tax and discounts represented in percentages

- Calculating simple probability and representing as fractions, decimals, or percentages
- Locating points and graphing in the first quadrant
- Identifying and substituting variables in expressions



SCIENCE

- Focus on the integrated study of Life, Physical, Earth and Space science
- Learning Advancing integrated science and math skills using measurement tools, scientific laboratory equipment and technology
- Inquiry and argument driven methods to evaluate scientific claims
- Priority given to engineering design to create and test prototypes
- Building on knowledge of coding and robotics; using them in model making and project based learning
- Connecting science, technology, engineering and art to solve problems and understand concepts
- Cross-Curricular learning opportunities
- Advancing collaboration skills and knowledge



SPANISH

- Reading and writing to prepare students for higher-level Spanish
- Using games and activities on the SMART Board to reinforce learning
- Integrating music, literature, drama, and art from other cultures
- Enhancing speaking skills through conversation with St. Francis students and community members, as well as with peers in other countries

SIXTH GRADE



ENGLISH

- Developing critical reading habits in the context of fiction and nonfiction
- Writing in various genres and formats, including literary analysis
- Engaging in evidence-based discourse
- Exploring and refining speaking skills
- Continued development of grammar skills



HISTORY

- Comparing, contrasting, and discussing Texas history using historical mediums of expression
- Watching historical information come to life through advanced technology and innovation
- Creating digital presentations of historical concepts
- Practicing and engaging with citizenship as residents of Texas and the USA.
- Local and regional experiential learning opportunities



MATH

- Expanding skills into pre-algebra, includes introduction to geometry, rational numbers, variables, probability, and proportional thinking
- Using a variety of techniques to master objectives
- Interacting with multimedia resources to support the learning of new math
- Working collaboratively to solve problems



SCIENCE

- Studying earth/space science, including geology, meteorology, oceanography, and astronomy
- Using scientific equipment and technology, including electronic probes and telescopes
- Incorporating science-related math skills, including basic dimensional analysis
- Connecting science concepts to real-world problems and participating in events including global partnerships
- Collaborating during lab experiments, problem solving, and project-based learning
- Creating spreadsheets to organize data and present with graphs and tables



SPANISH

- Reading and discussing a short chapter book in Spanish
- Researching the culture of a Hispanic country and preparing a regional dish to share with class
- Practicing Spanish-speaking skills in a restaurant setting
- Creating songs, jingles, or multimedia presentations
- Learning how to speak about favorite activities and pastimes

SEVENTH GRADE



ENGLISH

- Examining the world and work of Shakespeare
- Understanding the medieval world of knights, castles, and intrigue through reading and discussion of historical fiction
- Fine-tuning grammar skills, particularly in the context of the writing process
- Examining young adult literature through analytical reading, writing, and classroom discussion
- Studying heraldic symbolism by researching and creating a personal coat of arms
- Writing in various genres and formats
- Communicating ideas, understanding, and opinions with classmates through literary discussions



HISTORY

- Exploring world history through the lenses of great civilizations
- Expanding research skills
- Understanding multiple perspectives of a historical event
- Examining the role religion has played in shaping both the Eastern and Western Hemispheres
- Presenting historical research in written, oral, and visual presentations



MATH

- Enhancing problem-solving skills by approaching challenging, real-world problems using a clearly defined process
- Making the leap from understanding concrete math to understanding abstract math
- Progressing through operations on all rational numbers and solving linear equations

- Continuing to build on the foundations of pre-algebra concepts
- Expanding understanding of three-dimensional geometry



SCIENCE

- Increasing students' knowledge of the interconnectedness of humans and other living things
- Making connections between microscopic and macroscopic life
- Using compound microscopes to examine prokaryotic and eukaryotic cells
- Studying human body systems including connections to current health issues
- Developing skills related to engineering design processes
- Creating spreadsheets to organize data and present with graphs and tables
- Using online simulations and models to understand scientific concepts



SPANISH

- Illustrating and talking about daily routines
- Reading a short Spanish novel and creating a storyboard to illustrate the main events
- Creating a fashion show to demonstrate knowledge of adjectives and fashion
- Illustrating several holidays and detailing in Spanish how students celebrate them
- Competing with students across the United States through the National Spanish Exam

EIGHTH GRADE



ENGLISH

- Practicing the essay-writing process with emphasis on the argumentative essay
- Analyzing various literary forms in critical and aesthetic terms
- Using rubric-based assignments and assessments to understand quality over quantity
- Focus on analytical reading, writing, and thinking using fiction



HISTORY

- In-depth study of the United States Constitution
- Exploring the development of the United States into through the Civil War
- Working with primary sources and artifacts
- Developing research skills and writing a comprehensive research paper



MATH

- Advanced problem solving and development of critical-thinking skills
- Using TI-84 graphing calculator, TI-Nspire calculator, and technology resources to enhance learning
- Discovering and applying algebra in our daily lives
- Preparing students for paths of success in algebra and geometry in Upper School



SCIENCE

- Exploring physical science with a focus on physics and chemistry
- Applying mathematics and measurements
- Studying properties of and changes in matter
- Understanding and relating the atom, the periodic table, and chemical reactions
- Learning about mechanics, including force, energy, work, power, and electromagnetism, and their relationships to each other
- Examining sound, the electromagnetic spectrum, and optics
- Using electronic probes and basic engineering equipment



SPANISH

- Studying high school-level Spanish
- National Spanish Exam participation
- Preparing for high school placement into Spanish II, Spanish II Honors, or Spanish III
- Independent reading, including a short novel
- Engaging in real-life conversation with Spanish-speaking members of the faculty and school community
- Emphasizing the use of Spanish in the classroom



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