

MIDDLE SCHOOL CURRICULUM 2021-2022

St. Paul's School for Boys Middle School uses an experiential, inquiry-based, and holistic educational approach that is tailored to the unique needs of adolescent boys.

Our goal is for each student to develop the skills and habits of mind that lead to mastery of essential knowledge and to becoming lifelong learners. St. Paul's students learn to live by integrity in a safe and inclusive community.

Middle school faculty have dedicated their careers to this age group, and the close bonds between teachers and students are central to the SP experience. The mentor-advisor program helps forge those deep connections and instills what it means to be a St. Paul's gentleman.

Trained in project-based learning and experiential education, our teachers help students develop curiosity, autonomy, and creative thinking. Acknowledging that the learning process contains setbacks as well as successes, our middle school is the perfect place to develop a growth mindset while being supported by a nurturing faculty whose goal is progress over perfection.

In dozens of opportunities, from arts programs and athletics to multiple global travel options and Lego robotics, St. Paul's students build lasting relationships with their teachers and friends and develop appreciation for the natural gifts in themselves and others.

ENGLISH

The St. Paul's Middle School English faculty believe that middle school readers are empowered through choice reading. When they have control over what they read, they are more likely to find the right books and other media that will deepen their love of reading. The books they choose are used in the English classrooms as springboards for teaching the reading skills that are crucial for all middle schoolers to develop: making inferences, learning vocabulary in context, character analysis, et al, as well as studying the style of authors in order to emulate their approach in our own writing.

The choice reading program also motivates students to see that reading does not have to be some unpleasant chore or dreaded class activity. Instead,

students realize that reading is a pursuit that can expand their horizons, instill empathy and compassion, and enrich their lives for the better.

5th grade

In fifth grade, English Language Arts and History combine for a study of Humanities, in which boys learn how reading, writing, and history work together. In this block, boys have more time to learn about their place in the world through text, digital media, discussion, and individual reflection. Students will develop their questioning, analyzing, problem-solving, and collaborating skills by reading diverse literature and examining how civilizations developed.

In English Language Arts, boys will practice grammar and the mechanics of writing through various assignments, which include essays, presentations, book reviews, and journaling. Writing offers the students opportunities to share what they like about what they are reading, their personal experiences, and their connection to literature, while teacher feedback offers them avenues to improve their communication skills.

In History, boys will conduct research and find original solutions for problems that persist in our world. Students will zoom into various countries in Africa, the Americas, Asia, and the Near East in order to practice making observations, notice patterns, and develop claims. At the same time, they read contemporary novels, which include *A Long Walk to Water*, *Esperanza Rising*, and *A Single Shard*.

6th grade

English Six uses a “mission-based” approach to get boys as interested as possible in reading and writing, and to develop basic skills that they will use every day of their lives. Boys learn to imitate high-interest pieces of writing in a number of genres, analyzing how they work and figuring out what makes them good, as well as what they mean and why. Each boy is challenged to see a number of pieces of his writing through the writing process until they represent his best possible work, at which point he creates his own professionally-printed anthology. Additionally, they record audiobook readings in which they're able to develop fluency and comprehension through

expressive reading for an authentic audience. Always running in the background are the nuts and bolts that are so important: using appropriate writing mechanics (spelling, grammar, and punctuation), recognizing how pieces of writing are put together and why, and attending to the details in all that they read and write. Most of these activities are shaped by authentic challenges that require them to address a real problem and a real need with these very literacy tools. This also requires them to be collaborative and to seek answers and resources in ways that reflect the approaches we use as adults in the real world.

7th grade

Seventh grade is a year when students can foster a true love of reading and writing while simultaneously working towards mastery of key literacy skills in authentic ways. Seventh graders will express their creativity and demonstrate research and analytical skills through writing short stories, journaling, and exploring their cultural identity. Whole-class texts such as *Refugee* by Alan Gratz, *Code Talker* by Joseph Bruchac and *The Breadwinner* by Deborah Ellis allow students to make connections between their lives, novel themes and the world - something that is critical to the academic development and global awareness of adolescent boys.

Throughout the school year, students have many opportunities to express themselves through writing; this includes crafting essays, brief constructed responses, and speeches as a means of communication, entertainment, and personal expression.

Finally, students develop their persuasive writing and grammar/mechanics skills through weekly “Article-of-the-Week” assignments. These assignments involve reading an assigned article before annotating it thoroughly and writing a summary and personal response. The weekly articles address a variety of different topics and issues, and students practice discussion and debate skills in a respectful and safe environment.

Overall, the goal of seventh grade English is for students to become better readers, writers, speakers, thinkers, and listeners who are knowledgeable of the world around them.

Eighth grade

Eighth grade is the year of critical thinking and discussions, immersive shared and choice reading experiences, and writing across disciplines with a focus on craftsmanship. Our motto, “Do it as well as you possibly can,” permeates everything we do, from potentially mundane grammar exercises to expansive writing processes.

Students read, discuss, and write about essays, short stories, novels, and philosophical/moral questions, with great focus placed on their developing ability to summarize the main points accurately and express their own perspectives succinctly. The students also interact with these ideas in community through roundtable discussions in the classroom. Inevitably, disagreements arise, and focus is placed on using the appropriate tone and language in both written and verbal communication in order to further conversation rather than shut it down.

As readers, eighth graders combine all the strategies and vocabulary they learned in the lower grades while they tackle increasingly complex texts--such as Elie Wiesel’s harrowing *Night*, Ray Bradbury’s *Fahrenheit 451*, and Nic Stone’s *Dear Martin*--and participate in literary analysis, both orally and in writing. We get them ready—with ample practice and support—for the next level.

They also write across genres, and at different points in the year they can be found composing recaps of St. Paul’s sports games, personal essays, short stories, research papers, and scripts to one of the several podcasts each student produces as an 8th grader. Focusing on audience, structure, and elaboration, eighth graders take cues and moves from great writers—the authors of the books, stories and articles they read—and apply them to their own work.

SOCIAL STUDIES

Fifth grade- Humanities

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Sixth grade

The sixth grade World Cultures & Geography course introduces students to general aspects of physical and cultural geography by examining the interplay between physical and human characteristics. Using the UN's list of Sustainable Development Goals as a framework, students will examine how physical characteristics in different regions of the world affect and influence various human characteristics. Students will continue their progression of historical skills by locating reliable evidence via research, supporting arguments with specific historical evidence, engaging in civil discussions, and constructing historical questions of their own. This course strives to make authentic cross-curricular connections and seeks to impress an overall global awareness.

Seventh grade (will shift to pre-American and early United States History in 2022)

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historical questions of their own. This course strives to make authentic cross-curricular connections and seeks to impress an overall global awareness.

Eighth grade

The eighth grade history course examines the United States from the aftermath of the U.S. Civil War to present day. A continued focus on the historical skills fostered in grades five-seven, including a keen level of attention to primary and secondary sources, furthering writing skills, and confidently interacting with essential questions, ensures each student finds meaning in the eighth grade course and is prepared to successfully transition into the ninth grade. This course is designed to engage students to understand the United States in a global context so that they are prepared to develop and defend their own opinions on a range of topics.

Students will demonstrate their progression and mastery of analytical and research skills through a variety of projects and writing-based assessments. In addition, the eighth grade U.S. history course includes a deliberate emphasis on social-emotional learning, as well as a comprehensive analysis of the ever-changing nature of citizenship in the United States. Concepts such as morality, prejudice, human rights, and social justice are guiding pillars in our curriculum and are consistently explored by students, including through interdisciplinary projects and activities with the English department. We aim to infuse our students with the confidence to engage with the events of the modern U.S. and its place in the world as a result of a well-rounded history course that contextualizes the experiences of all peoples and stories from all corners of this country, ultimately leading to a stronger sense of empathy and awareness among our students.

MATHEMATICS

Studies Group – Student who have ERB scores of 3 and lower & teacher recommendation. Emphasis will be placed on redo and retakes. Retakes are available for tests and quizzes at the teacher’s discretion.

Standard Group – Students must maintain a B- or higher, ERB scores of 3 or higher & TEACHER RECOMMENDATION. Redo will be offered for tests only at the teacher’s discretion. Homework must be completed on time.

Accelerated Group – Students must maintain a B+ average or higher, ERB scores of 6 or higher & TEACHER RECOMMENDATION. No redo tests, quizzes or assignments. Students must consistently complete homework assignments and projects.

To move up a level, a student must maintain an A or A+ each Quarter *without* retakes and an A or A+ on the final assessment, ERB's of 6 or above, plus TEACHER RECOMMENDATION.

5th Grade

Math Studies 5

The 5th grade math class master basic skills of elementary school math. Key topics will be whole numbers, decimals, number sense, fractions and geometry. Emphasis will be placed on mechanics of multiplication, division, properties, and simple fractions. Patterns will be examined. Real World application will be used throughout each unit using problem solving. Simple Algebra skills will be introduced. Projects may include applications of area and perimeter, and probability.

Sixth Grade

Math Studies 6

The sixth grade math class will focus on Number Theory with all operations and relationships of numbers, especially positive integers. Number sense will be emphasized with lots of repetition and manipulatives. Students will explore decimals and fractions in depth before moving onto some Geometry topics and simple algebra skills. Foundation skills will be emphasized and with problem solving investigations. Word problems will be used to extend understanding of concepts. Projects may include applications of area and perimeter, and probability.

Intro to Pre-Algebra

The sixth grade Intro to Pre-Algebra class investigates math connections using manipulatives, analysis and practice. The sixth grader conquers arithmetic with whole numbers, decimals and fractions. Number theory underlies the comprehension of math: prime factorization, divisibility rules, greatest common factor and least common multiple, and exponents. The system of ratio numbers including negative numbers is explored. These are the foundation of math knowledge and its understanding. The relationships of decimals, fractions and percent are explored through real-life application in

word problems and through repetition. Math concepts are explored through simple problem solving to complex analysis of word problems and algebra scenarios. Word problems are used to extend concepts and real-world problems are explored. Projects may include, applications of area and perimeter, rate and ratio project based on food, and probability.

Pre-Algebra

The sixth grade Pre-Algebra class investigate math connections using manipulatives, analysis and practice. The sixth grader conquers arithmetic with integers, decimals and fractions. Number theory underlies the comprehension of math: prime factorization, divisibility rules, greatest common factor and least common multiple, and exponents. These are the building blocks of math knowledge and its understanding. The relationships of decimals, fractions and percent are explored through real-life application through word problems and repetition. Math concepts are examined through simple problem solving to complex analysis of word problems and algebra scenarios. **This class will explore each unit at an in-depth level with challenge problems.** Projects may include applications of area and perimeter through creating a Dream House which includes budgeting for construction, rate and ratio project based on food and furniture, and probability.

Seventh Grade

Math Studies 7: Introduction to Pre-Algebra

Students will review Whole Numbers with Order of Operations. Integers and all forms of Rational Numbers are the main emphasis. Perimeter and Area of Geometric figures will be used in investigating Rational Operations. The fourth quarter will emphasis Equation solving. Practice using the foundation of math skills will be included. Projects may include an architectural project.

Pre-Algebra

This course begins with a heavy emphasis on Integers and Order of Operations. A range of one-dimensional elements such as points, lines, and rays are explored. Two dimensional shapes are studied, and students will be able to master perimeter and area. Visual thinking and inductive reasoning skills are used to analyze these geometric figures. A strong foundation of Exponents, Expressions, and multistep Equations will be built. Rational numbers in all forms will be manipulated and the equivalent relationship between decimals, fractions, percent, ratios, and proportions will be studied.

This year focuses on the layering of foundational skills. Projects may include: an architectural project.

Accelerated Pre-Algebra

This course begins with an Introduction on Finite Systems and Mathematical Properties. Students will examine a variety of sets and their relationships. A range of one-, two-, and three-dimension geometric lessons from points, lines, rays, and angle relationships to polygons and circles to solid figures are explored. The second semester will include Evaluating Expressions, Rules of Exponents, Solving Multi-Step Equations, Literal Equations, and real-World Applications. Throughout the year, students will have opportunity to demonstrate mastery of proportional relationships and operations with Rational Numbers. Projects may include: an architectural project.

Eighth Grade

Pre-Algebra (offered as needed)

This course begins the year focusing on integers, rational numbers, and rational operations. The course will also use geometer sketchpad to hit key geometry topics. The second semester will focus on rules of exponents, solving equations, linear equations, and real-world applications of algebra. Projects may include geometry concepts using geometer sketchpad.

Algebra 1

The Algebra 1 course emphasizes mastering essential Algebra skills. The students investigate expressions, equations, inequalities, linear equations, systems of equations, polynomials, factoring, quadratic equations, rational expressions, irrationals, and functions. They also use geometer sketchpad to re-examine important geometry concepts from the previous two years. Finally, they work on real-world problem-solving skills in preparation for the Upper School. Projects may include geometry concepts using Geometer Sketchpad.

Accelerated Algebra 1

The Algebra 1 course emphasizes mastering essential Algebra skills. The students investigate expressions, equations, inequalities, linear equations, systems of equations, polynomials, factoring, quadratic equations, rational expressions, irrationals, and functions. They also use geometer sketchpad to re-examine important geometry concepts from the previous two years. Finally, they work on real-world problem-solving skills in preparation for the upper school. The accelerated course works at a faster pace and ends the year

investigating some Algebra 2 topics. Projects may include geometry concepts using Geometer Sketchpad.

SCIENCE

Fifth Grade:

Fifth grade is the first year that science is introduced as a core subject. The 5th grade curriculum utilizes life science as the vehicle to introduce students to the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) and the skills necessary to find success throughout their time in middle school. The students work on a variety of skills throughout the year including reading comprehension, note-taking, observation and inference, and critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Additionally, the students explore the scientific method. Finally, a strong emphasis is placed on developing and honing the students' executive functioning skills.

The Chesapeake Bay serves as the focal point of the curriculum. By examining the environment, ecology, and evolution of the bay, the students gain a better understanding of the world around them. Students will delve into the plant and animal kingdoms to explore a variety of subjects: trees, flowers, arthropods, mollusks, fish, and birds. Furthermore, hands-on activities and project-based learning are integral to the curriculum and serve to generate meaningful educational experiences for the students as they explore the bay and its environment. Finally, students will consider their own role in the surrounding environment and reflect on the impact that their decisions have on the world around them.

6th Grade:

Sixth grade Science is a concentration on health and human systems. It begins with an understanding that students are entering a stage of development where they are beginning to have more and more control over their lives. Healthy decisions and habits can be responsible for a higher quality of life. With this understanding students begin to explore the major systems of the body from a health perspective. "What can I do to promote maximum health for this body system?" is the question posed as students learn about how the overall wellness of the human organism is dependent upon good, knowledge-based choices. Students will explore the following units: Lab Safety, The Metric System of Measurement, The Scientific Method, The Generalized Cell, The Skeletal System, The Circulatory System, Civil War Field Medicine, The Digestive System, The Reproductive system, The Nervous System & PTSD

Research, and will conduct a Disease Research Health Fair. Content from readings, including textbook and on-line resources, is reinforced with lab investigations and projects that reinforce the skills necessary to do science. Study skills are emphasized, and students have a variety of assessments along their unique journey. Also, note-taking is taught during research for projects following the Big 6 Research Method.

Seventh grade

Science students in the seventh grade endeavor to utilize the scientific method to explore and model the fundamental principles of the Earth's Land, Atmosphere, Space, and Oceans. Most importantly, they utilize the NGSS skill framework to continue building a solid foundation of success in science making interconnected relationships shaping people and the environment. Using the lens of "Earth-Environment-Evolution" students will explore the following topics: climate, weather, natural disasters, oceans, rivers, solar system, galaxies, constellations, sun, moon, rocks and minerals, plate tectonics, and natural resources. Most importantly, seventh graders will examine the interconnected relationship among humans, the planet, and beyond. Students will reinforce the essential skills of science through guided and open-ended investigations, as well as participate in numerous demonstrations and lab investigations.

Eighth grade:

Eighth grade Robotics is a quarter-long introduction to programming that utilizes VEX IQ robotics as the vehicle to teach important problem-solving skills. This class has a strong focus on project-based learning that fosters the responsible use of technology and the development of a strong foundation of the skills necessary to define a problem and iterate through to a solution. They will put these skills to the test as they build a VEX IQ robot that responds to their commands to compete against each other in various challenges. At quarter's end, the boys will have acquired a framework to build upon as they pursue robotics, computer science, and other IB programs in the Upper School.

Students in Physical Science endeavor to utilize the scientific method to explore and model the fundamental principles of chemistry, physics, and engineering. Most importantly, they utilize the NGSS skill framework to continue building a solid foundation of success in science as they begin their first year of the three-year science sequence aligned to the Upper School science department. Topics covered include the foundations of chemical

reactions, atomic theory, periodicity, classical physics, electricity, engineering design, iterative processes, and design thinking. Students reinforce content from reading and lecture through guided and open-ended investigations, as well as participate in numerous demonstrations and lab exercises.

WORLD LANGUAGES AND CULTURES

St. Paul's Middle School is committed to filling every language class with compelling, **Comprehensible Input**. **Comprehensible Input (CI)** is a term used to refer to a methodology of Second Language Acquisition. **CI** is researched-based and founded on fundamental principles of *Second Language Acquisition*. **CI** instruction is student-centered instruction, based on the theory that students will seek to comprehend what interests them. We know that compelling language leads to faster acquisition.

The goal for each St. Paul's graduate is proficiency in the world language he chooses. At the Middle School level, this journey begins with comprehension of the new language. As with acquisition of native language, students will be able to understand more than they can produce. Speaking and writing begin to take root but, as compared to a traditional language classroom, there is a greater emphasis on comprehension with increasing levels of difficulty. By the 8th grade, there is understanding of a more complex language structure, laying the foundation for Upper School courses and, ultimately, communicative proficiency.

Studies show **CI** classrooms consistently produce students who have higher communicative competence in the long run than students who learn in what we might call traditional language classrooms. We use guidelines from the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Language (ACTFL), regarding desired speaking and writing outcomes for each language level.

SPANISH

By the end of 5th grade, students will have familiarity with the language, exposure to target cultures, an interest developing their language skills, understanding of basic stories, and a positive personal experience associated with learning a new language.

By the end of 6th grade, students will be able to use a number of repetitive words and simple phrases to convey basic information about themselves. They can understand common actions, stories, and conversations.

By the end of 7th grade, students will be able to communicate with familiar words on a number of tasks, topics, and activities. They begin to combine words and phrases that reflect very simple, original sentences using a greater array of vocabulary acquired in class.

By the end of 8th grade, students will be able to communicate with a variety of words and phrases and elaborate with more detail. They will be able to combine simple sentences and express thoughts in original sentences. They continue to make speaking error, but their errors do not interfere with overall communication.

JAPANESE

By the end of the 5th and 6th grade program, students will have familiarity with reading and writing Hiragana and Katakana. They are also introduced to basic Kanji. They can use words and phrases to convey simple information about themselves.

By the end of the 7th and 8th grade program, students will be able to communicate in writing, using Hiragana, Katakana, and Kanji, as well as be able to speak on a variety of topics. They will be able to elaborate with detail and original thought. They continue to make speaking errors, but their errors do not interfere with overall communication.

8th Grade Capstone Project

CRUSADER CON

Service is a cornerstone of the St. Paul's Middle School experience. From fifth through eighth grade, students are guided in an exploration of community and empathy as a result of a reflective service-learning program. Additionally, one of the essential skills for boys to develop is the ability to speak confidently in front of an audience. The St. Paul's Middle School capstone project is the natural culmination of both. By eighth grade, students explore and learn about a local issue

that is relevant and meaningful to them. The students identify, partner, and serve with organizations that are working to address the various challenges in the community. Each eighth grader then prepares a culminating project about their selected topic, which in past years has included a podcast and TED-style talk.

Students complete this work with the support of their advisor, while the presentation is prepared with guidance from their History and English teachers. The final product is a result of the skills students have acquired throughout their middle school experience. The projects are then shared with St. Paul's and the surrounding community. Students present at a special convention-style event, Crusader Con, which takes place each May. Leaders from across the Baltimore area, many of whom have been integral parts of the students' service learning experiences throughout their time in the middle school, are also invited. Service is a cornerstone of the St. Paul's Middle School experience, and one of the essential skills for boys to develop during their middle school years is the ability to speak confidently and clearly in front of an audience; the St. Paul's 8th Grade capstone project is the natural culmination of both. The process is a collaboration between the eighth-grade history and English teachers, and the final products vary based on community needs and student choice.

STEM

6th Grade Intro to Robotics and Programming

Sixth grade Intro to Robotics and programming is a quarter-long introduction to programming and robotics that aims to engage students and develop important problem-solving skills. Every student will take it through the school year. This class has a strong focus on project-based learning that fosters the responsible use of technology and the development of a strong foundation of the skills necessary to define a problem and iterate through to a solution. We will begin by programming a very simple game in Python and then put these skills to the test as they build a VEX IQ robot that responds to their commands to compete against each other in a capstone challenge. At quarter's end, the boys will have acquired a framework to build upon as they continue to explore their engineering passions in the middle school and beyond.

7th Grade Intro to Engineering and Design

Seventh grade Intro to Engineering and Design class is a quarter-long introduction to the different skills necessary for today's engineers. Every student will take it through the school year. They will explore 3d modeling and CAD design as they model and build their very own 3d printed model rocket. They will also design and build their very own CO2 dragster capable of racing 20 meters in just under 1.5 seconds. We will be learning how to work from a design and iterate through each step of the process, testing designs virtually to understand how modifying certain parameters and constraints can have large implications to the final product. Some other topics we will be covering include sustainable design, CAM manufacturing, and design thinking.

RELIGIOUS AND FAITH STUDIES

5th grade

The fifth-grade Religious Studies course, *Exploring the Old Testament*, introduces students to the structure and content of the bible with a focus on the old testament. They learn the books of the Hebrew scriptures and how to use the resources found in the bible. The course will then cover the stories of creation and other important events and figures such as Abraham and Moses. Students also spend some time learning about Israel as a monarchy, under both the united and divided kingdoms. They also touch on wisdom literature, especially the book of psalms.

8th grade

Foundations of Faith, the quarter long course for the 8th grade, is designed to provide a basic understanding of Judeo-Christian history and traditions. Students move at a fast pace in their exploration of the Biblical narrative of the Hebrew people as presented in the Old Testament. The course then moves into the New Testament and focuses on the teachings and ministry of Jesus in the historical context of 1st century Palestine under Roman rule. The boys also learn about St. Paul and his significance to the early formation of the Christian faith. By the end of the quarter the students will understand how the Jewish and Christian religions are closely related yet unique in their beliefs and practices.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

The Middle School Physical Education Curriculum begins in fifth grade with a progression from the Lower School. The curriculum rotates between basic skills such as throwing, catching, striking different implements and locomotor

movements such as running, jumping, and more. This is in line with what the students have learned in lower school and prepares them with the foundation needed to take on more advanced concepts and progressions in 6th, 7th, and 8th grades. Each student is evaluated on each skill before and after the curriculum is executed.

In 6th and 7th grade, the skill focus begins to extend. For example, instead of working on throwing as a basic skill, we work on throwing to moving targets and throwing to targets while moving. Along with this, we begin to employ concepts of sport such as 2v1, 3v2, pick and roll, understanding passing lanes, and moving without the ball. These advanced concepts are developmentally appropriate and are a component of a Sport Education format. In sport education, each student takes on a role as they participate in the game. Students experience roles as captain, coach, fitness instructor, publicist, manager, or leadership council. Each person executes this role as well as officiates and keeps stats and score while they are not playing. In this team-oriented atmosphere, students are able to learn, interact, and take responsibility for classroom management. Within this framework, teachers are able to work with individuals to improve their skill and concept development.

In 8th grade, Students take a more scientific approach to physical education. Students learn their major muscles and exercises to develop each muscle group. They discuss weight room safety and proper form, as well as how to set up and execute a weight-training plan for improvement in specific sport. Agility, heart rate, flexibility and other nutritional concepts that benefit a healthy lifestyle and lifetime physical activity are reinforced. There are also important opportunities for play and interaction between the students to raise their social acumen and prepare them for upper school sports and team dynamics.

ARTS

The Arts program in the Middle School is designed to challenge and captivate students through a comprehensive range of curricular and extracurricular offerings. Students in grades five through seven study visual art, (including painting, drawing, ceramics, and additional 2D and 3D forms), Theatre, music, and woodworking, while eighth grade students have the opportunity for advanced study in two of these four disciplines. On any given day, for example, you may find students rehearsing the Middle School production, crafting a

wooden sculpture in the Woodworking shop, learning stage combat in one of our two black box theaters or the Ward Center Theater, attending a choral festival off campus, presenting at an arts exhibit at a local museum, or working with guest artists from the greater Baltimore community.

VISUAL ART

The Middle School Visual Art program encourages students to explore art through various media, to engage in creative problem solving, to take risks and challenge themselves and to understand and appreciate the process of making art. Through a series of assignments that explore different art forms, students are exposed to the basic elements of art: line, form, shape, texture, color, space, and value. They are also introduced to the principles of balance, pattern, contrast, rhythm, emphasis, unity, and movement, which are also integral aspects of art making.

Students engage in projects that encourage individual expression and reflection, and foster the ability to think more creatively and broadly about the visual world. Evaluation is a key component to each art project where personal effort, engagement with the material, and progress in the studio will form the basis for assessing skills and knowledge of various art techniques.

5th grade

Fifth grade Visual Arts introduces the concepts of color theory, emphasizing creative expression along with technical skills. Students will be confident in understanding how different elements of art contribute to their overall work.
Art History Focus: Survey of Art History

6th grade

Sixth grade Visual Arts reinforces elemental concepts previously learned and additionally introduces more advanced concepts. Through guided questions, students are encouraged to actively participate in creating purpose in their work.

Art History Focus: The Ancient World

7th grade

Seventh grade Visual Arts introduces advanced techniques and skills to encourage individual exploration and growth. Students will become confident in discussing and critiquing works of art. Students will study realism in both 2D and 3D forms.

Art History Focus: The Italian Renaissance

8th grade

Eighth grade Visual Arts is the culmination of incorporating previously learned concepts and skills through advanced techniques based on individual encouragement of exploring, discovering, and experimenting. Meaning and method will play a fundamental role in the creation of student work.

Art History Focus: Modern Art-Post Modern Art

WOODWORKING

Woodworking classes are designed to introduce students to wood as a natural resource, as a building material, and as a medium for artistic expression. An awareness of environmental concerns, plant biology, math, engineering, historical context, sequencing, problem solving, design, and conceptual creativity are all introduced as necessary components for successful work. In particular, the projects students undertake emphasize the "how to" aspects of working with wood as well as the creative opportunities such projects offer. There is also an emphasis on respect for tools and their safe and appropriate use. Regular exhibitions of student work on campus, as well as the welcoming of guest artists into our courses, are a capstone of our program.

5th grade

Fifth grade Woodworking is designed as an introduction to wood, hand tools, and craftsmanship. The projects incorporate very basic joinery and serve as a foundation for future work.

6th grade

Sixth grade Woodworking is designed to reinforce the lessons taught in the 5th grade, but challenges students further through the scope of the projects given. New tools are also introduced, including some basic power machinery.

7th grade

The primary focus of the 7th grade woodworking class is Design Process. For each project, students will be challenged to research design possibilities, present a variety of ideas in the form of drawings and/or mock-ups, focus on a single idea, and flush-out the technical details before they begin building. This process, while critical to success in project building, can be applied in more general terms to all forms of creative challenges, in academics and beyond.

After a review of the general shop safety rules and safety rules specific to the lathe, drill press, band saw, and other power machines, we will start right into the first project. This will be a relatively quick assignment, intended to help returning students review and refresh their previous wood experience and to help new students become accustomed to the tools and materials. Our second project will be the major project for the semester. This is where our focus on Design Process will guide students through all of the steps necessary to find success on a project that will be both technically and conceptually challenging. The third project will offer students a chance to work with fresh-cut lumber, which while it can be wonderful to turn and carve, presents its own challenges as it dries. Students will have some choice here as to the nature and scope of this project.

In addition to design, reflection, and the numerous woodworking processes taught, attention will also be paid to the biologic nature of wood as an organic material and its critical importance as an environmental resource.

8th grade

This course will begin with an extensive introduction and review of shop safety rules, followed by an introduction of tools and techniques not covered in the lower grades. Students are required to complete a minimum of two projects. These are designed to challenge students both technically and creatively. The first assignment will focus primarily on methods of joinery and quality craftsmanship. The second assignment will challenge students to work intuitively through techniques of shaping, carving, and texturing. There will also be an extensive focus on turning on the lathe.

MUSIC

The choral music tradition at St. Paul's School is the primary focus of our comprehensive Middle School Music program. Students are also exposed to instrumental performance, as well as music theory, sight-singing, and improvisation in a variety of musical genres. An extra-curricular ensemble, the Crusader Choir, is an auditioned group of boys from all grades (five through eight) who maintain a highly active performance schedule in various venues throughout the region and at an adjudicated festival each year.

5th grade

Fifth grade Music students receive instruction in vocal technique, music theory, stage deportment, and musical interpretation as they engage in the

preparation of a concert performance as a choral ensemble at the end of each semester. They will encounter numerous elements of music theory (dynamics, musical expression, tempo, time signature, etc.) and will encounter Kodály-based sight-reading examples. Students will perform repertoire from a variety of genres, cultures, and time periods.

6th grade

In addition to their continued development as performing singers, sixth grade Music students are also introduced to hand bells. This instrumental offering builds the sense of ensemble while also gaining independence and responsibility. The boys continue to have extensive studies with vocal technique and sound production while also be exposed to training in music theory and sight-reading.

7th Grade Crusader Choir

This is the elite choral ensemble for St. Paul's Middle School. More subtle elements of musical expression and increasingly challenging music theory are incorporated into instruction. Kodály-based sight-reading continues to be a hallmark of the program. Vocal instruction will address the emerging male voice, and help students further discover their vocal possibilities. The Crusader Choir maintains a highly active performance schedule throughout the region including an adjudicated festival at the conclusion of the year. In addition to choral singing, the 7th grade class will also perform various handbell repertoire ranging from classical selections to modern pop songs.

8th Grade Crusader Choir

This is the elite choral ensemble for St. Paul's Middle School. More subtle elements of musical expression and increasingly challenging music theory are incorporated into instruction. Kodály-based sight-reading continues to be a hallmark of the program. Vocal instruction will address the emerging male voice, and help students further discover their vocal possibilities. The Crusader Choir maintains a highly active performance schedule throughout the region including an adjudicated festival at the conclusion of the year. Students will learn the fundamentals of music theory to compose musical passages and songs. Students will also be exposed to different music writing technologies (Finale, Sibelius, Noteflight, Garageband)

THEATRE

Theatre classes give our students the opportunity to experience leadership and teamwork in a different way than they might in the academic classroom or on the athletic fields. There are many exercises and improvisations designed to encourage the boys to work together efficiently, think creatively, and explore the concept of empathy in order to better understand the world around them and discover the range and depth of possibilities that are inherent in the Theatre arts. Students have the unique extra-curricular opportunity to audition for our Middle School Musical, produced in collaboration with the St. Paul's School for Girls.

5th Grade Theatre

In Theatre 5, there is a strong emphasis placed on “ensemble” and the ability to collaboratively build earnest and meaningful universes on stage. Through a wide-array of acting techniques, improvisation, and scene work assignments, students begin to understand the principles and functions of stage performance, playwriting, and overall storytelling.

6th Grade Theatre

Theatre 6 reinforces the various concepts covered in Theatre 5 but with a wider scope of repertoire that includes Period Acting as well as introductions into the various disciplines of Musical Theatre. The course culminates in a live evening performance of scenes and demonstrations.

7th Grade Theatre

In the semester length course of Theatre 7, students will both explore and interconnect the various disciplines within the art form more thoroughly. These disciplines include but are not limited to: acting, playwriting, directing, stage management, lighting design, Theatre history, and Musical Theatre (performance, choreography, composition, and lyric writing). Lastly, students will synthesize these disciplines further through the culminating performance of a one-act play.

8th Grade Theatre

In Theatre 8, students will further explore and employ the philosophies and practices of various great Theatre coaches such as Stanislavski, Spolin, Meisner, and Hagen in order to authentically create more realized universes of characters and story. The course will culminate in the performance of multiple play performances uniquely tailored to the enriching of every individual student within the class.
