



# Middle School Course Catalog 2023-2024

Educating the total student – spiritually, intellectually, and physically – in a caring, Christian family community.



# 2023-2024 COURSE CATALOG

## Grades 6-8

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# WELCOME

Welcome to St. Croix Lutheran Academy!

I am so glad you are part of the SCLA family. As you prepare for high school, you probably have a lot of questions. What is SCLA like? What classes should I take? What kinds of activities are offered?

This catalog answers these and many other questions. Take a few minutes to find out about the Christian education SCLA offers, and you will see that you have made an excellent choice.

If you have more questions or need assistance, please contact me at (651) 455-1521 or [BEssig@StCroixLutheran.org](mailto:BEssig@StCroixLutheran.org).

Blessings,



Brad Essig  
Middle School Principal

## PROFILE

St. Croix Lutheran Academy is a private Christian school that welcomes grades 6-12 students from all backgrounds since 1958. The culturally diverse community includes 500 students from the greater Twin Cities metropolitan area, across the United States, and to date, from over 40 countries across five continents.

Fully-accredited secondary educational institution, Minnesota Nonpublic School Accrediting Association (MNSAA).

Member of the Association of Lutheran High Schools and the Minnesota Independent School Forum MISF)

Over 70% of SCLA's highly qualified faculty hold advanced degrees in their field.

The student to faculty ratio is 13 to 1, and the average class size is 20.

SCLA students consistently score above the Minnesota state average on the ACT and SAT college placement exams.

95% of SCLA graduates continue their education with post-secondary studies.

# MISSION

Since SCLA opened in 1958, the mission has remained central in the approach to education. SCLA is fully committed to educating the total student – spiritually, intellectually, and physically – in a caring, Christian family community.

St. Croix Lutheran Academy offers a college-preparatory curriculum during a two-semester school year. Students take core classes to meet graduation requirements and participate in a variety of electives. Advanced Placement (AP) classes are offered in calculus (AB and BC), English, physics, history, music theory, and psychology. Students can also earn college credits through online courses and STEM programs. Additionally, SCLA participates in the state-sponsored Post-Secondary Enrollment Option (PSEO), which allows qualifying juniors and seniors to take classes at the college level for both high school and college credit.

SCLA is a member of the Minnesota High School League (MSHSL) and Skyline Conference, which includes area public, private, and parochial schools. About 75% of students participate in at least one of nearly 50 co-curricular activities including: baseball, basketball, bowling, clay target, cross country, dance, esports, football, golf, hockey, lacrosse, math team, one-act play, robotics, drone racing, soccer, softball, speech, tennis, track, volleyball, and wrestling. The athletic complex includes one of the best tracks in the metro area, a football field, soccer fields, baseball and softball diamonds, tennis courts, as well as a gymnasium and weight room.

In 2020, a new front entrance with updated security and a fine arts addition including new band, choral, and practice rooms were completed. The fine arts improvements also included doubling the size and updating the visual arts room. The SCLA auditorium was renovated in 2022. A new practice gym and other school facility and programming improvements are in the planning stages.

A Christian education at SCLA includes daily chapel, volunteer service opportunities, religion classes, and Christian values integrated in all aspects of school life. SCLA alumni demonstrate in their choices that the value of a SCLA education lasts a lifetime.

Educating the total student

- spiritually, intellectually, and physically -  
in a caring, Christian family community

## PURPOSE

St. Croix Lutheran Academy is a Christ-centered educational ministry sharing God's love with all students. This is accomplished by pointing students to the truths of God's word in the Bible, by helping students strengthen their relationship with their Savior Jesus, and by sharing the good news of his love for all with those who do not yet know him as their personal Savior.

## CORE VALUES

<b>Biblical World View</b>	We believe that the Bible is God's unchanging truth, the foundation for all learning and life, and the message of God's saving grace for all.
<b>College Preparation</b>	We challenge and support students and staff to develop and utilize their God-given gifts in order to become productive leaders in the school, church, and local/international community.
<b>Excellence</b>	We pursue excellence in all aspects of Christian education - academics, athletics, and the arts - to the glory of God.
<b>Global</b>	We embrace the culturally diverse backgrounds, perspectives, and gifts of individuals to enrich excellence and to enable one's personal ministry.
<b>Student Focused</b>	We recognize all students are unique, and we strive to put their needs first, as we help them develop spiritually, academically, physically, socially, and emotionally.

# ADMINISTRATION AND STAFF

The SCLA team shares a commitment to value each student, to assist them in planning their education, to support them in their work, to be responsive to their needs, and to celebrate with them the successes they will have.

## Administration

Brian Shult, Executive Director  
Nate Kallies, Principal  
Bradley Essig, MS Director  
Dr. Ryan Rathje, Academic Dean  
Adam Frey, Dean of Students

## Activities

Phil Bunkowske, Director  
Austin Eisenmann, MS Director  
Rachel Grev, Athletics Assistant

## Admissions

Amanda Tess, Domestic Coordinator  
Anna Biedenbender, Domestic Counselor  
Hannah Schmiege, Director of Intl. Admissions and Programs  
Christine Wolfrath, Intl. Assistant  
Kristin Lehmann, International Counselor

## Building and Grounds

Curt Richter, Director  
Steve Frenz, Maintenance  
Aaron Odegard, Maintenance  
Jim Julian, Maintenance  
Curt Montgomery, Maintenance  
Rachael Wollersheim, Maintenance  
Allen Wright, Maintenance

## Communications

Kristina Lewerenz, Director

## Dormitory

Garrett Schoch, Director  
Tamara Julian, Student Advisor  
Gregory Brisolara, Supervisor  
Isaac McCloskey, Supervisor  
Kostia Skorenkyi, Supervisor  
Maria Reese, Supervisor  
Sara Rieke, Supervisor  
Hannah Willems, Supervisor

## Finance

Glenn Will, Business Manager  
Lori Kowitz, Operations Manager

## Food Service

Pioneer Food Services

## Guidance

Rev. David Huebner, Director  
Rev. Dustin Sievert, Ministry  
Amanda Tess, Assistant/Records  
Tammy Sloane-Kloss, Attendance

## Mission Advancement

John Dvorak, Director  
Kaitlin Rupprecht, Alumni Relations  
Lisa Streckert, Administrative Asst.  
Heidi Karbon, Gala Coordinator

## Nurse

Joey Nilan, ISD 197

## Office Support

Chris Tollefson, Office Manager  
Lisa Streckert, MS Admin. Assistant  
Naomi Johnston, Receptionist

## Registrar

Amanda Tess, International  
Dave Tess, Information Specialist

## Technology

Brad Holum, IT Specialist

## TEACHING FACULTY



**Anna Biedenbender (2021)**

B.S. Art

Classes: Art

Responsibilities: Domestic Admissions Counselor



**Austin Eisenmann (2021)**

B.S. Education

Classes: PreAlgebra, Algebra

Responsibilities: Middle School Athletic Director



**Brad Essig (2021)**

B.S. Education

Classes: Bible, Math 1

Responsibilities: MS Principal



**John Fenske (2013)**

B.S. Music Education

Classes: Band

Responsibilities: Boys Basketball Coach



**Pastor Dave Huebner (1988)**

B.A.; M. Div.

Classes: German 2,

Responsibilities: Girls Soccer Coach



**Mark Kaiser (2017)**

B.S. Education

Classes: Bible, History, 6th Grade PE

Responsibilities: Assistant Football Coach



**Nate Kallies (2017)**

B.S. Education; M. Ed. Educational Leadership

Classes: Bible

Responsibilities: High School Principal



**Lorna Kapanke (2012)**

B.S. Education; M.Ed., Special Education

Classes: Developmental Reading, LRC

Responsibilities: LRC Director, New Friends Coordinator



**Kristin Lehmann (2017)**

B.S. Psychology; M.A. Chinese Studies

Classes: Mandarin 1/2/3

Responsibilities: Intl. Admissions Counselor, Intl. Activities



## TEACHING FACULTY



**April Marquardt (2017)**  
B.S. Elementary Education  
Classes: MS ESL, MS Spanish  
Responsibilities: Speech Coach



**Mike Marquardt (2017)**  
B.S. Elementary Education  
Classes: Choir



**Ryan Maertz (2022)**  
B.S., Education  
Classes: Middle School Science/STEM



**Cory Olson (2013)**  
B.S. Education; Secondary Ed Certification  
Classes: German 1, Spanish I  
Responsibilities: Wrestling Coach



**Abby Plocher (2021)**  
B.S. Education  
Classes: Art, Language Arts



**Sarah Sauer (2010)**  
B.S. Education; M.A. Teaching of Languages  
Classes: Spanish 2, ESL 1 and 2  
Responsibilities: Girls Soccer Coach



**Karen Scislow (2019)**  
A.A.; B.A. Art Education  
Classes: Art



**Pastor Dustin Sievert (2016)**  
B.A.; M.Div.  
Classes: Religion  
Responsibilities: Director of Ministry Recruitment,  
Boys Basketball Coach

## ADMISSION AND REGISTRATION

St. Croix Lutheran Academy admits students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin in its administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship programs, and athletic and other school-administered programs.

Students interested in attending St. Croix Lutheran Middle School should call the school office (651-455-1521) to make an appointment with the admission counselor, Anna Biedenbender.

To apply, students will need to provide:

- A transcript of grades which includes a full year of grades, attendance record, and any IEPs or other pertinent information
- Two recommendation forms from current teachers
- A non-refundable application fee

## TWO SEMESTER SYSTEM

The St. Croix Lutheran school year runs from late August to June and is divided into two semesters.

## GRADING

Grades are available online at any time throughout the semester. These grades are not final, but indicate a student's progress to that point. Final grades are assigned for all credit courses at the end of each semester.

# COURSES

## **U.S. History**

Students learn the history of the U.S. from the colonization of America through the Revolutionary War, the Constitution, the Civil War, and to present-day America. The curriculum emphasizes a multi-perspective look at history.

## **World Cultures & Geography**

Students learn the physical and political geography of the world. The course introduces students to the five themes of geography: location, place, region, human environment interaction, and movement. Students learn by connecting ancient civilization to present day cultures. The curriculum emphasizes a multi-perspective look at history and the impact of cultures on historical events.

## **World History**

Students survey events of history around the world and make deeper connections to topics that relate to current world affairs.

## **Science 1:**

### **Diversity of Life, Chemical Interactions, Planetary Science**

In Life Science, the structures and functions of living organisms are explored.

The study progresses from organisms, their behaviors, cells, and adaptive structures and strategies. By exploring matter in Chemistry, students conduct experiments to observe phase change, dissolution, and reaction.

This course helps students construct a solid basic understanding of the composition of their world and the energy interactions that maintain and transform the world. In Planetary Science, students study the Earth as a celestial object, the moon, and other bodies in the solar system. Students explore the celestial motions, Moon phases, lunar geology, cratering processes, imaging technologies, scaling, and space exploration.

One semester

## **Design & Modeling**

This STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) course introduces students to the design process. Students use the design process to solve problems and understand the influence that creative and innovative design has on our lives. Students use technical methods and CAD software to create drawings of designs that serve other people.

One semester

**Science 2 :****Human Brain and Senses, Earth History, Force and Motion**

In Life Science, students study the human body systems, memory, diseases, and conditions. In Earth Science, students investigate sedimentary, igneous, and metamorphic rocks. In Physical Science, students investigate laws of motion, describe movement using graphs, and relate force, acceleration, mass, time, and momentum in common formulas.

One semester

**Automation & Robotics**

The purpose of this STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) course is to introduce students to mechanical systems, energy transfer, machine automation, and computer control systems. Students trace the history, development, and influence of automation and robotics. Students use a robotics platform to design, build, and program solutions to existing problems.

One semester

**Science 3 :****Populations and Ecosystems, Weather and Water, Electronics**

In Life Science, students explore organisms and their environments, roles every organism plays in its ecosystem, and structures and behaviors that allow organisms to survive. In Physical Science, students discover how the electric force provides structure to everyday objects, and build and understand simple and complex circuits while measuring and monitoring electric properties. In Earth Science, students investigate how atoms and molecules, changes of state, and heat transfer affect weather.

One semester

**Green Architecture**

In this STEM course, students learn how to apply sustainability to the fields of architecture and construction by exploring dimensioning, measuring, and architectural sustainability as they design affordable housing units using Autodesk's® 3D architectural design software.

One semester

**Math 1**

This course provides foundational support for the development of major mathematical, statistical, algebraic, and geometric concepts.

**Pre-Algebra**

Prepares students for Algebra 1 and reinforces fundamental math skills. Students learn to use variables in formulas, solve equations, solve problems and interpret data. Topics include real numbers, algebraic expressions, equations and inequalities, ratios & proportions & percents, functions and linear representations, systems of equations, geometry, measurement, and probability and statistics.

Prerequisite: Department approval or Math 1

Two Semesters

**Algebra I**

Explores mathematical concepts with an emphasis on variables and equations. These skills are applied to real-life situations as often as possible.

Topics include: algebra basics, multi-step equations and inequalities, relations and functions, linear equations, direct and inverse variation, systems of equations and inequalities, exponents and exponential functions, polynomials and factoring, basic quadratic equations, statistics, rational expressions and equations, and radical expressions and equations.

Prerequisite: Pre-Algebra or department approval

Two Semesters

**Algebra II (High school level class)**

This course advances topics taught in Algebra I. Additional study of polynomials, exponents, radicals, systems of equations and quadratics is included. Right triangle trigonometry, Law of Sines and Law of Cosines are studied. Advances topics taught in Algebra 1. Additional study of counting theory, probability, sequences & series, an introduction to analytic geometry, and an introduction to logarithms.

Prerequisite: Algebra 1 or department approval

Two Semesters

**Developmental Reading**

This literacy intervention course reinforces fundamental reading skills.

Emphasis is on sentence writing proficiency, comprehension, and fluency.

Students will grow in confidence while being accelerated toward grade-level proficiency. This course is typically taken concurrent with a student's grade-level language arts course.

Prerequisite: Recommendation of middle school principal; standardized test scores.

Two semesters

**Language Arts 1**

Students develop the ability to construct and convey meaning through reading, writing, and speaking. They will comprehend and analyze various genres through short stories, informational texts, and novels appropriate to their age level. They will learn English grammar basics through exercises and transfer that knowledge to daily activities. They will explore different writing styles through formal essays and creative writing. They will enhance speaking skills through discussions, performances, and presentations. Through all of this, students will be encouraged to think critically and apply literature to their own lives.

## Language Arts 2

Students develop the ability to construct and convey meaning through reading, writing, and speaking. They will comprehend and analyze various genres through short stories, informational texts, and novels appropriate to their age level. They will learn English grammar basics through exercises and transfer that knowledge to daily activities. They will explore different writing styles through formal essays and creative writing. They will enhance speaking skills through discussions, performances, and presentations. Through all of this, students will be encouraged to think critically and apply literature to their own lives.

## Language Arts 3

Students develop the ability to construct and convey meaning through reading, writing, and speaking. They will comprehend and analyze various genres through short stories, informational texts, and novels appropriate to their age level. They will learn English grammar basics through exercises and transfer that knowledge to daily activities. They will explore different writing styles through formal essays and creative writing. They will enhance speaking skills through discussions, performances, and presentations. Through all of this, students will be encouraged to think critically and apply literature to their own lives.

## World Literature and Intermediate Grammar

(High school level class)

This course will provide students with the necessary tools to evaluate a variety of literature from around the world in the light of God's word and to organize their thoughts and express themselves with the purpose to persuade.

Prerequisite: Recommendation of middle school principal; standardized test scores.

## ESL 1: Reading and Writing

The purpose of this course is to provide international students, whose primary language is not English, with a variety of reading and writing experiences in English to further the development of each student's fluency, vocabulary, reading comprehension, English grammar and general writing skills in American English.

## ESL 2: Speaking and Listening

The purpose of this course is to provide international students, whose primary language is not English, with a variety of listening and speaking experiences in English to further the development of each student's pronunciation, fluency, vocabulary, listening comprehension, English grammar and general speaking skills in American English.

## ESL 2: Grammar and Composition

The purpose of this course is to provide international students, whose primary language is not English, with grammar, composition, and speaking support while concurrently enrolled in World Literature.

**Middle School Spanish 1A**

Students begin their introduction to Spanish by focusing on the four key areas of foreign language study: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Each unit consists of a new vocabulary theme and grammar concept, reading/listening comprehension activities, speaking and writing activities, cultural presentations, and interactive activities and practices that reinforce vocabulary and grammar. The instructor will use Spanish and English while teaching. Much of the learning is accomplished during the class period itself. Spanish 1A is the equivalent of one semester of high school Spanish 1.

**Middle School Spanish 1B**

Students continue their language learning adventure by progressing to the next level of middle school Spanish. Throughout the course students focus on the four key areas of foreign language study: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Students should expect to be actively engaged in their own language learning, become familiar with common vocabulary terms and phrases, comprehend a wide range of grammar patterns, participate in simple conversations and respond appropriately to basic conversational prompts, analyze and compare cultural practices and perspectives of various Spanish-speaking countries, and take frequent assessments where their language progression can be monitored. Spanish 1B is the equivalent of semester 2 of high school Spanish 1.

**Spanish I** (High school level class)

Students develop a working vocabulary for a variety of life situations. Students learn speech patterns through speaking dialogues, composition, reading, and completing several listening labs in which students hear native speakers from many different Spanish-speaking countries.

**Spanish II** (High school level class)

Students continue to strengthen their skills of listening, reading, writing, and speaking in Spanish. They will also gain a deeper appreciation for the different Spanish-speaking cultures. Emphasis is placed on applying grammar concepts and enhancing oral proficiency through a variety of activities.

**German I** (High school level class)

Students learn written and spoken German. Students gain confidence in speaking German through memorizing vocabulary and idioms, studying grammar and syntax, and learning about German culture through videos and CDs.

**German II** (High school level class)

Students expand knowledge of German vocabulary, idioms, forms, and syntax; and develop conversations in various social settings, such as school, at home, in restaurants, and other leisure-time activities.

**Mandarin Chinese I** (High school level class)

Students are introduced to the sounds, basic grammar, and vocabulary of Mandarin, along with the Chinese writing system. They participate in basic and practical conversation and character recognition.

**Mandarin Chinese II** (High school level class)

Students continue to develop a working vocabulary in speaking and writing Mandarin by being involved in real life situations.

**Bible A:** This course is an introduction to Christianity. The class will explore the meaning and purpose of God's Word for our daily life. Students will examine Scripture and seek to apply God's word to their own heart as well as to situations within the home, their church and culture.

**Bible B:** The purpose of this course is to introduce students to God's great exchange—how he sent his Son, Jesus, to take our place of punishment for sin. This course also takes students from creation to Moses, with a very brief introduction to the 10 Commandments. The second semester takes the student through the Gospels/Life of Jesus.

**Bible C:** The purpose of this course is to give the students a basic knowledge of the Bible, who God is, the 10 Commandments, the fulfillment of prophecies of the Old Testament, and the New Testament Church. Most importantly, the students will hear throughout this course the saving message of Christ crucified, died, and raised for all of the world throughout all eternity.

**Art**

Students will learn about many artists and art periods. Students will create works using a variety of techniques, mediums and tools, allowing them to express themselves through their work.

**Vocal Music**

This course seeks to provide foundations in vocal technique, choral singing, music theory, and music appreciation. Students participate in written, oral, and online activities and perform in required Christmas Concert, Twin Cities Fine Arts Festival and Spring Musical.

**Instrumental Music**

This course will combine instrumental playing, music theory, and music appreciation. Students will play individually and in a group. The students will have regular assignments in their specific instrument, in which a theory book and technology will be used.



## Physical Education

This course provides students with opportunities to engage in physical activity, both through team and individual sports and through personal fitness. The goal is to provide students with countless examples of ways you can be physically active throughout their lifetime. In 6th grade PE, students participate together in sports and activities together throughout the semester. In 7-8th grade, students are split into two groups in which they rotate between two instructors on sports and physical fitness activities. Groups are split depending on class size and scheduling.

## LEARNING PROGRAMS

### Intro to Middle School (grade 6 only)

This course is designed to help ease the transition from elementary school to middle school. Students will learn skills and characteristics for success. There will be a rotation of modules as students work on organization, technology in the classroom, typing, writing, and leadership. Their final project (Genius Hour) for the year will be a compilation of the skills and strategies they have worked on throughout the year.

### HOMEROOM

Three times a week, students will focus on an area of life preparation in their homerooms. The purpose of the homeroom course is to assist students in acquiring basic life skills. Some of the topics for this include:

- Conflict resolution
- Peer pressure
- Etiquette and manners
- Christian leadership
- Christian decision-making
- Goal setting
- Study Skills

### EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

Throughout the school year, students participate in experiential learning opportunities, including two overnight trips, as well as local day trips.

The goal of these activities is for students to see that learning takes place beyond the classroom walls.

### LEARNING RESOURCE PROGRAM

The Learning Resource Program seeks to better meet the learning needs of students and their families who desire a Christian education at St. Croix. This formal program aids students with learning needs to experience success at school, as well as provide much needed support for their families and teachers. A Learning Resource Center is used with the program to conduct specialized study halls before, during, and after the school day.

# COURSE SAMPLE

This is what an average class schedule could look like per grade. Because of ability grouping, mainly for math and language arts, students from all middle school grades may be in the same courses. U.S. History, World Cultures, and World History are on a three year rotation with all grades combined in one course each year.

\* Placement tests will determine the course for math and language arts.

## **Grade 6 Courses**

- World Cultures
- Science and STEM
- Math 1 or 2\*
- Language Arts 1 or 2\*
- Bible A, B, or C
- Physical Education
- Art
- Music (Vocal or Instrumental)
- Intro to Middle School

## **Grade 7 Courses**

- U.S. History
- Science and STEM
- Math 1 or 2, Algebra 1\*
- Language Arts 2 or 3\*
- Bible A, B, or C
- Physical Education
- Art
- Music (Vocal or Instrumental)
- World Language

## **Grade 8 Courses**

- World History
- Science and STEM
- Math 2, Algebra 1, Algebra 2
- Language Arts 2 or 3, World Lit. and Intermediate Grammar\*
- Bible A, B, or C
- Physical Education
- Art
- Music (Vocal or Instrumental)
- World Language

# CO-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

## **Athletics**

St. Croix Middle School competes in volleyball, football, basketball, baseball, and track. In addition, students in grades 7 and 8 may join the following high school teams: soccer, cross country, girls swimming, bowling, dance, wrestling, hockey, girls tennis, track, golf, softball, and lacrosse.

## **Fine Arts**

Fine arts activities include a drama production in the spring, a public speaking festival, and several concerts during the school year. Students in grades 7 and 8 are invited to join the high school speech team.

## **Clubs**

- Speech
- Math
- Robotics
- Newspaper
- Introduction to the Weight Room
- Youth in Government
- International Mentors

## QUALITY CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

- 470 students in grades 6-12, average of 75 in grades 6-8
- Diverse student body – 17 countries and 5 states represented
- 95% of grads go on to post-secondary education
- 38 instructors – 70% with master's degrees
- 18:1 student to teacher ratio
- Average class size is 20
- Chapel worship and Bible classes a part of student schedules
- Learning Resource Center
- 88% of classrooms equipped with interactive whiteboard or smart TV technology
- 100% of campus equipped with wireless internet access

### **To schedule a personal visit, contact:**

Anna Biedenbender, Domestic Admissions Counselor  
ABiedenbender@StCroixLutheran.org  
651-455-1521 x1171

Brad Essig, Middle School Principal  
BEssig@StCroixLutheran.org  
651-455-1521 x1121



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