

Garrison Forest School



Middle School
CURRICULUM GUIDE

2023-24

Garrison Forest School

GARRISON FOREST SCHOOL'S MISSION AND PHILOSOPHY

At Garrison Forest School, we prepare our students in and out of the classroom to thrive in a complex, changing world by:

- Challenging them to strive for academic excellence and to grow into informed, independent and creative thinkers;
- Cultivating an authentic and resilient sense of self, grounded in respect and integrity;
- Creating a diverse and inclusive community built on a spirit of caring;
- Inspiring young women to lead and to serve with passion, purpose and joy.

Our motto informs our mission: *Esse Quam Videri*—"To Be Rather Than To Seem."

STATEMENT OF RESPECT

The Garrison Forest School community is deeply committed to equity, honesty, kindness and respect as part of the educational experience. To this end, we:

- Strive to celebrate diversity both within our community and our curriculum;
- Are concerned for the well-being of all people;
- Seek to build the self-esteem of all people;
- Aspire to promote understanding among all people.

We recognize the dignity and worth of all individuals. To protect their rights, we confront bias, prejudice and discrimination. Garrison Forest does not condone any behavior, which is inconsistent with these tenets. We believe that it is unacceptable for our spoken and written language and behavior to demean anyone's physical characteristics, as well as anyone's ethnic, gender, personal, racial, religious or sexual identities. We, as individuals, must take responsibility for our words and deeds and respect all people.

GARRISON FOREST'S SCOPE OF PROGRAMS

Garrison Forest School offers an exceptional elementary, middle and high school program for girls, beginning in Kindergarten. For grades 8-12, Garrison Forest also has a regional, national and international boarding program. The coed Preschool begins with a Parent-Toddler program and has classes for two, three, and four-year-old boys and girls. For more information on the Preschool, Lower School, Middle School, Upper School or boarding programs, please visit www.gfs.org or contact the Admission Office at (410) 559-3111.

MIDDLE SCHOOL COURSE PROGRESSION GUIDE

6TH	7TH	8TH
Geography & World Cultures*	US History 7*	Global Citizenship* Capstone Course*
Math 6 Math 6 Enriched	Math 7 Math 7 Enriched	Math 8 Math 8 Enriched Geometry Elective
English 6*	English 7*	English 8*
French 6 Spanish 6	French 7 Spanish 7 Latin 7*	French 8 Spanish 8 Latin 8* Chinese Elective
Environmental Engineering* RISE*	Life Science*	Physical Science*
Music 6* Dance 6* Theatre 6*	Music 7* Dance 7* Theatre 7*	Music 8* Dance 8* Jazz Band Elective Guitar Elective
Art 6*	Art 7*	Art 8* Graphic Design Elective Fashion Design Elective
Life Positive*	Discoveries*	Crossroads*
Digital Thinking I*	Digital Thinking II*	Yearbook Elective Coding Elective
Sixth Grade Seminar* ARC Study Hall	ARC Study Hall Echoes	ARC Study Hall Echoes
PE 6*	PE 7*	PE 8* Grizzlies on the Go Elective

* indicates all students enrolled

BIG PICTURE 6TH GRADE



CREATING A VISION FOR THE FUTURE

Students will explore human behavior and its impact on the planet, focusing on using their agency to make a difference.



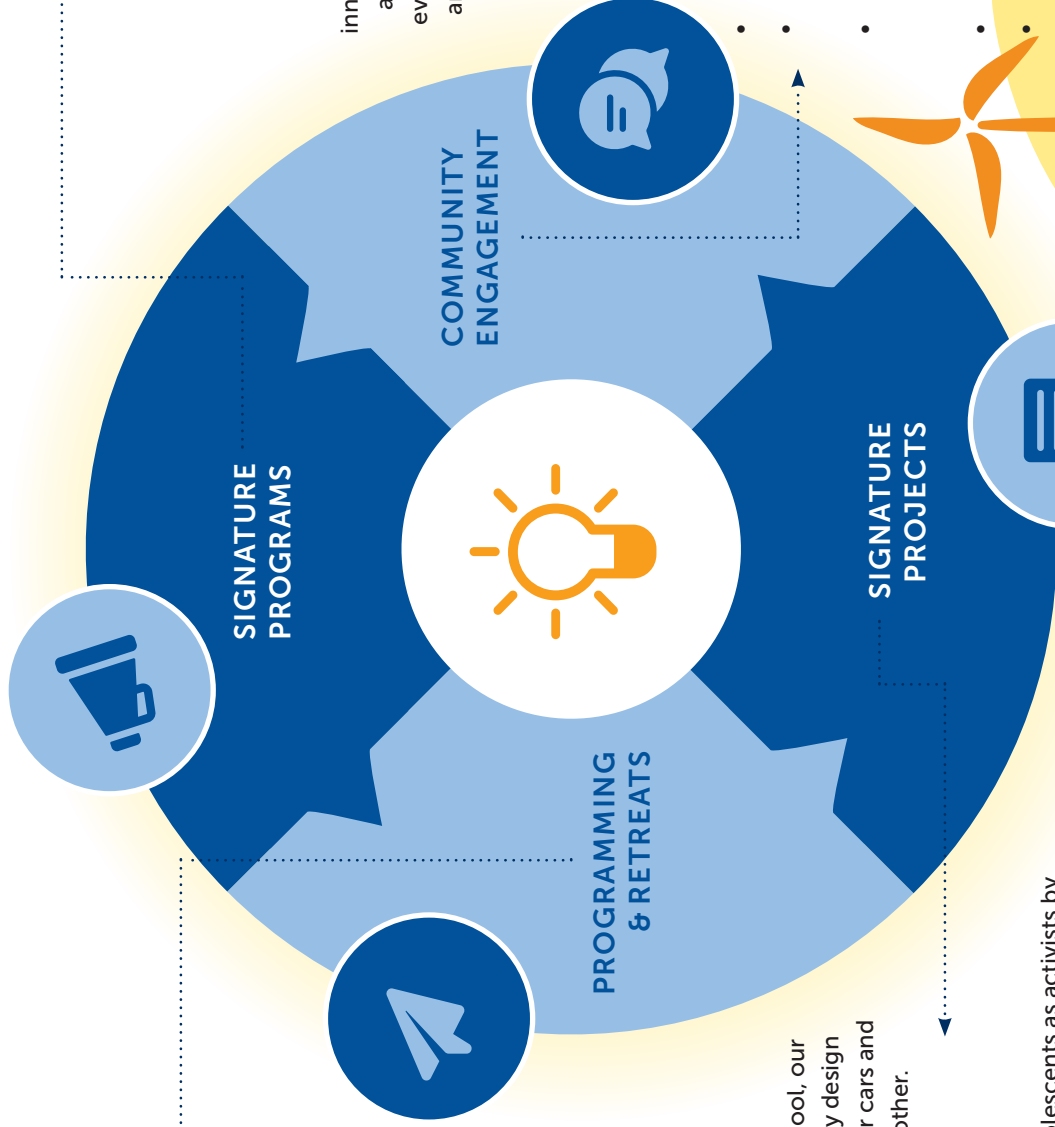
- Sixth Grade Sneak Peek
- Sixth Grade Seminar
- Life Positive Classes
- Advisory Program
- Fall Trips/Sixth Grade Retreat
- Earth Day
- CARE Week

STEM DAY

In conjunction with Boys Latin School, our 6th Grade students work to employ design thinking to create gliders, propeller cars and catapults to compete with one another.

TEEN ACTIVISM

Students explore the power of adolescents as activists by reading novels through the lens of social issues, developing research papers on teen activists and their platforms, fundraising for a non-profit organization and working in groups to create Public Service Announcements.



RISE (RESEARCH, INNOVATION, & SCIENTIFIC EXPLORATION)

Students will partner with educators at Irvine Nature Center to conduct authentic research, identifying a question or a problem that they are curious about and creating an innovative solution. Students will design and conduct experiments, collect and evaluate data, build models, and reflect and revise in order to create a product that answers their question or solves the problem.

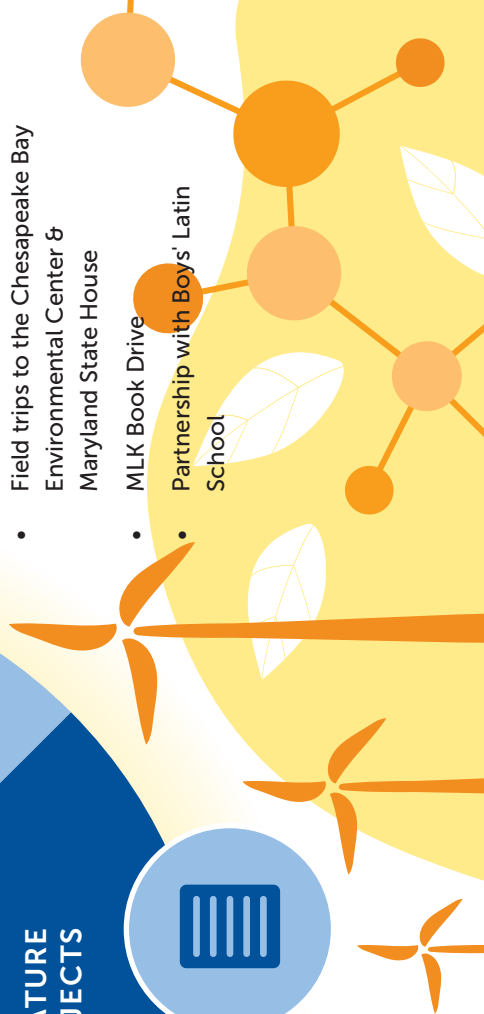
• Global Read Aloud

• Partnership with Irvine Nature Center

• Field trips to the Chesapeake Bay Environmental Center & Maryland State House

• MLK Book Drive

• Partnership with Boys' Latin School

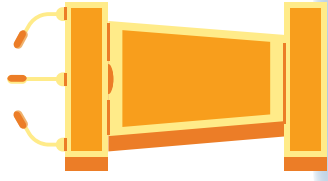


BIG PICTURE 7TH GRADE



EXPLORING OUR COMMUNITY

Students will explore their community, diving into history to examine lessons from the past and their role as leaders for the future.

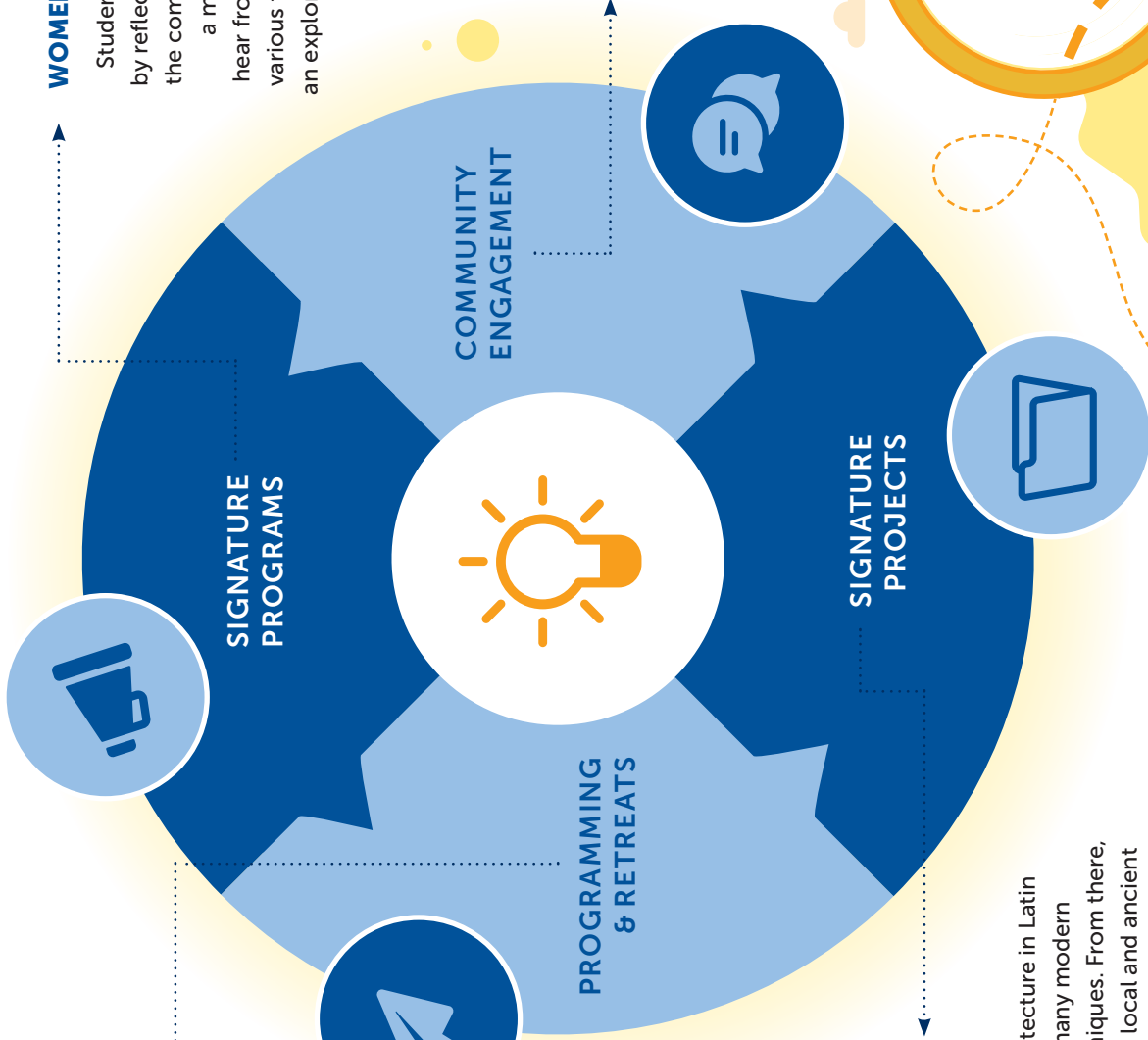


- Decision Making Classes
- Advisory Program
- Fall Trips
- Seventh Grade Middle School Mid-Year Retreat
- Olympiad

WOMEN OF IMPACT SPEAKER SERIES

Students will explore the traits of a leader by reflecting on one's impact on others, on the community and on our world. Through a monthly speaker series, students will hear from women having an impact across various fields and industries, culminating in an exploration of their own leadership style, strengths and aspirations.

- Partnership with the Belair Edison School and the Donald Bentley Food Pantry
- Field trips to Mt Vernon historic landmarks and Philadelphia



PROJECT INNOVATE

Groups of students work to create and present solutions to some of the challenging issues that face Garrison Forest School, from programs to campus spaces and usage.

ARCHITECTURE EXPO

Students begin their study of ancient architecture in Latin before heading into Baltimore to see the many modern applications of classical architecture techniques. From there, students do extensive research comparing local and ancient landmarks and develop their own structures in our Maker Space.



BIG PICTURE 8TH GRADE



EXPANDING OUR WORLD

Students will explore complex issues with a global lens, working to develop global competencies as citizens in a diverse, interconnected world.



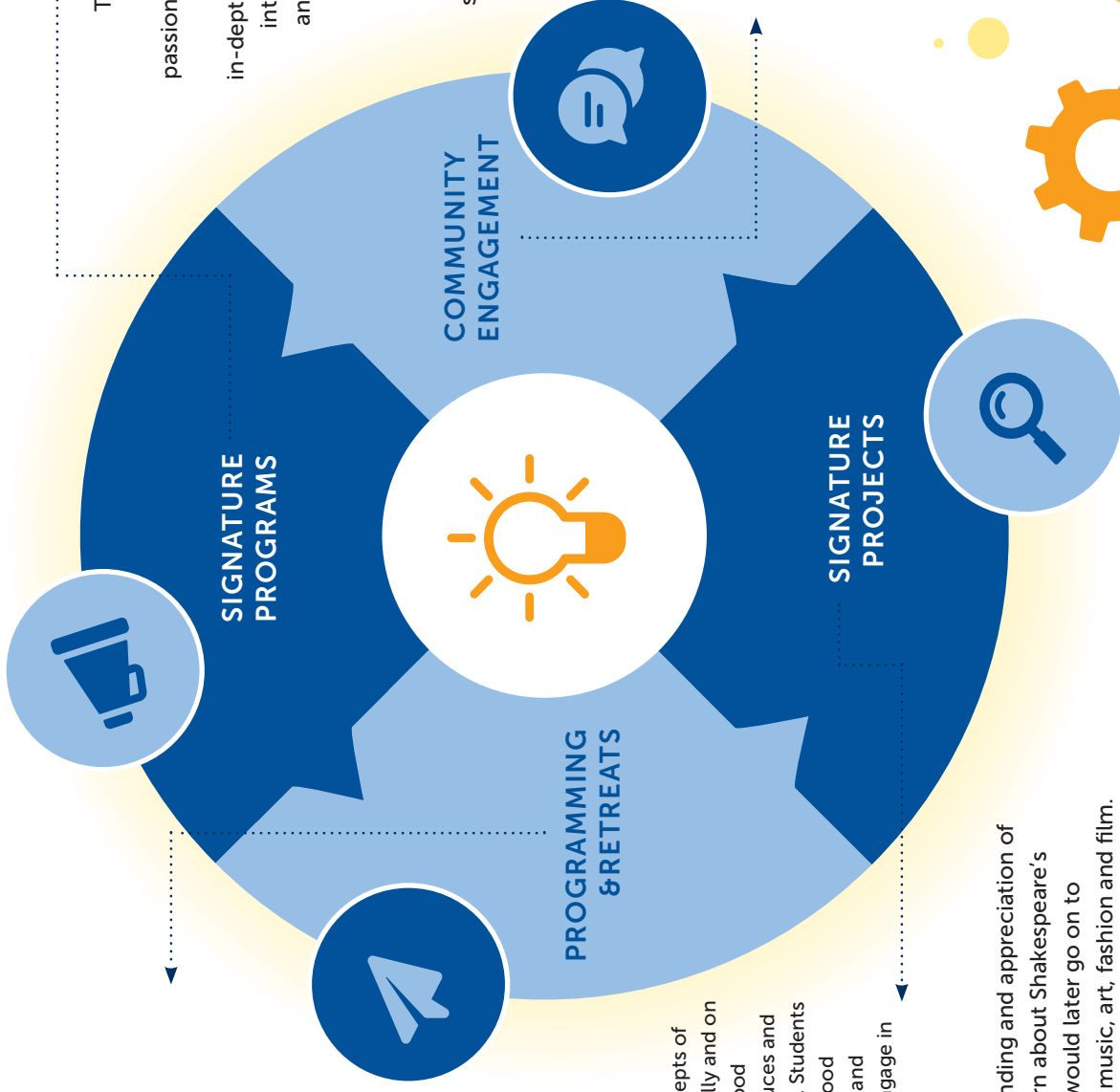
- Crossroads Classes
- Upper School Peer Education Program
- Advisory Program
- Fall Trip to NYC
- Multicultural Potluck
- Global Citizenship Class
- Eighth Grade Retreat/Day of Dialogue

FOOD JUSTICE

Students work to understand the concepts of food justice and food sovereignty locally and on a global scale, analyzing where their food comes from and who processes, produces and prepares it and under what conditions. Students will apply this knowledge to examine food equity both in the Baltimore/D.C. area and abroad and will work individually or engage in service learning in the Baltimore area.

SHAKESPEARE STUDY

To help develop a better understanding and appreciation of William Shakespeare, students learn about Shakespeare's prolific body of literary work that would later go on to influence culture through writing, music, art, fashion and film. The project culminates in their own performance for the Middle Forest community.



CAPSTONE

The semester-long Capstone Course empowers students to explore their passions and "ideas worth sharing" through personal reflection and intentional, in-depth research. The project is broken up into three sections: Discover, Develop, and Share. Each section is designed to help students build presentation literacy and public speaking skills. The course culminates with each student's own TED-style Talk in a showcase for the Middle Forest School and Garrison Forest community.

- Partnership with TED-Ed
- Latin Day Celebration with Bryn Mawr School
- Field Trips to New York City, the Walters Art Museum and the Chesapeake Shakespeare Company
- Donald Bentley Food Drive
- Service Learning at Paul's Place, Baltimore Hunger Project and the Weekend Backpacks Program



ENGLISH

English 6:

The Sixth Grade English curriculum is designed to foster an appreciation for literature, educate in textual analysis, provide students with an understanding of basic literary elements, and continue building on vocabulary and grammar. Students read literature from around the world to see how the works reflect different cultures. Featured works include: *Prairie Lotus*, *Other Words for Home*, and *A Wish in the Dark*. Students participate in both Readers' and Writers' Workshop Units, including taking part in a Social Issues Book Club and writing a personal narrative and a literary essay. Grammar skills and vocabulary are taught throughout the course and in tandem with reading and writing.

English 7:

The Seventh Grade English curriculum incorporates a wide variety of literary experiences through a mixture of short stories, vignettes, drama, poetry, and novels. Students are exposed to diverse themes and literary elements to enhance and broaden their understanding and appreciation of literature. Featured works include: Varian Johnson's *The Parker Inheritance* and the dramatized play version of *The Diary of Anne Frank*. Additionally, a thematic book club and biography unit allow for student choice. Grammar skills are taught in tandem with writing literary paragraphs, an analytical essay, and a Writers' Workshop Unit on short stories.

English 8:

The Eighth Grade English curriculum offers many different reading experiences that include whole class novels, book clubs, and independent reading. Students read Tara Sullivan's *The Bitter Side of Sweet*, Christina Soontornvat's *All Thirteen*, and William Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* as whole class texts as a way to practice reading comprehension and collaborative discussions. For book clubs, students read a selected text in small groups as either a thematic study or genre study. Several times throughout the year, students drive their own learning through self-selected independent reading, keeping track of their personal goals and commitment to reading. Using a Writer's Workshop model, students learn to write a variety of writing pieces including critical review, personal narrative, poetry, investigative journalism, and literary essays. Students learn vocabulary and grammar skills throughout their reading and writing units.

MATHEMATICS

Math 6

In Math 6, students review number systems and operations and develop a basic understanding of number theory, including factors and multiples. A focus on fraction, decimal and percent concepts allows students to make connections among the different forms. Expressions, equations and inequalities are explored, and ratios and proportional reasoning are introduced. Students develop and use formulas for perimeter and area of triangles and special quadrilaterals. In each unit, students are encouraged to look for patterns, make conjectures, create connections and apply their knowledge to new situations.

Math 6 Enriched

In Math 6, students review number systems and operations and develop a basic understanding of number theory, including factors, multiples and prime factorization. A focus on fraction, decimal and percent concepts allows students to make connections among the different forms. Expressions, equations and inequalities are explored, and ratios and proportional reasoning are introduced. Students develop and use formulas for perimeter and area of triangles and special quadrilaterals. More importantly, all of the math they learn will be related to various experiences and applications in everyday life in order to give the students meaning and reason. They will be expected to engage with smaller “real world” projects over the year in order to increase their awareness of the importance of mathematics in their lives. In each unit, students are encouraged to look for patterns, make conjectures, create connections and apply their knowledge to new situations.

Pre-Algebra 7

In Pre-Algebra 7, students develop algebraic thinking through patterns, graphs, tables, and symbols. Multi-step equations and inequalities in one variable are examined, and slope and linear functions are introduced. Students explore linear relationships using graphs and then connect their understanding to equations. Applications of real numbers and exponents allow for introduction and exploration of The Pythagorean Theorem and Scientific Notation. Three-dimensional geometry is also explored, giving students the tools to compute volume and surface area. In each unit, students are encouraged to look for patterns, make conjectures, create connections and apply their knowledge to new situations. There is a strong focus on problem solving, cooperative learning and communication in mathematics. Additionally, students will learn the appropriate use for calculators and computers as tools to supplement mathematical thinking.

Pre-Algebra 7 Enriched

Pre-Algebra 7 Enriched is a rigorous introductory course designed to immerse students in algebraic thinking through patterns, graphs, tables, and symbols. Multi-step equations and inequalities in one variable are examined, and slope and linear functions are introduced. Students explore linear relationships using graphs and then connect their understanding to equations. Applications of real numbers and exponents allow for introduction and exploration of The Pythagorean Theorem and Scientific Notation. Three-dimensional geometry is also explored, giving students the tools to compute volume and surface area. The focus of this course is on critical thinking, allowing students to be exposed to a deeper vocabulary of mathematical terms and array of methods to cope with various algebraic and geometric algorithms. More importantly, all of the math they learn will be related to various experiences and applications in everyday life in order to give the students meaning and reason. Students will be expected to engage with smaller “real world” projects over the year in order to increase their awareness of the importance of mathematics in their lives. Additionally, students will learn the appropriate use for calculators and computers as tools to supplement mathematical learning.

Algebra 8:

The Algebra 8 course consists of a thorough study of algebra concepts, focusing both on symbolic manipulation and applied problem-solving. Students will study pre-algebra skills (review), representations of linear and quadratic relationships (equations, tables, graphs), laws of exponents, polynomials, factoring, functions, systems of linear equations, inequalities, and square roots. Students will receive an introduction to functions and modeling with linear functions. There is a strong focus on problem solving, cooperative learning and communication in mathematics.

Algebra 8 Enriched:

In Algebra 8 Enriched, students will explore the same concepts as Algebra 8. The students will be able to dive deeper into the mathematics behind the topics and use challenging problems to develop critical thinking skills. The curriculum will be supplemented with advanced algebra concepts to adequately prepare students for Geometry/Trigonometry in the Upper School.

Blended Geometry (Honors):

In Blended Geometry, students engage in a rigorous study of Euclidean geometry including points, lines, planes, angles, parallel and perpendicular lines, triangles, quadrilaterals, polygons, congruence and similarity, inequalities in triangles, right triangles, area and volume, and coordinate geometry. The nature of deductive proof and the structure of a mathematical system are emphasized throughout the course. The class is taught in a blended model where students are learning concepts with the teacher and through online resources as well as collaboratively with their peers.

HISTORY

Geography & World Cultures 6:

This course uses an interdisciplinary approach to introduce students to the cultural and physical geography of the world's major regions. Students work in cooperative learning groups and engage in tasks and projects that require them to research aspects of various region's major cultures and topography. Students will use maps, movies, images, newspaper/magazine articles, artwork, and current events to help enhance their understanding of how geography affects different lifestyles. Themes that are explored throughout the year include cultural universals, ethnic and religious diversity, human interaction with their environment, and the impact of natural and historical forces on the shape of the earth.

U.S. History 7:

This survey course covers major developments in American history from Colonial settlement through the late 19th century, covering the complexities of colonization, rebellion, the U.S. Constitution, industrialization, slavery, civil war, and reconstruction. This course aims to educate students on early American history from all points of view. Students will engage in simulations, interpret primary sources, and research and write expository essays on assigned topics as well as topics of their choice. Learning how to develop and support a thesis and citing historical sources are two major objectives of this course. Special emphasis is placed on developing the research and analytical skills of a historian rather than the memorization of key dates and events.

Global Citizenship:

In the 8th-grade Global Citizenship course, students will learn what it means to be a responsible global citizen. Students will engage in research and discussion in an effort to better understand global issues such as food justice, migration, international economies/ living wage and public health. This course seeks to enhance students' awareness of the world outside of their immediate communities, increase their curiosity about global topics, and encourage them to think critically about global issues. Through inquiry-based learning and exploring various perspectives, students will identify global issues in specific communities, establish what has caused or contributed to the issues, discover obstacles and barriers to solutions and identify methods of how a responsible global citizen would respond.

SCIENCE/STEM

Environmental Engineering 6:

Environmental Engineering combines the disciplines of physics, earth and environmental sciences to study the processes that influence how people have influenced and interacted with Earth. Topics of study include the importance of water and its cycle, astronomy and its universal effects, geology and how landforms and masses have evolved over time, and the dynamic processes of plate tectonics.

RISE (Research, Innovation & Scientific Exploration):

Created in partnership with the educators at Irvine Nature Center, this year-long sixth grade project is designed to engage students in authentic research and problem solving. The students will employ collaborative inquiry skills focused on finding innovative solutions to local social and environmental issues. Using research skills and the combination of reflection, feedback, and craftsmanship, students will engage in hands-on research throughout the year in their Environmental Engineering class.

Life Science 7:

Life Science is designed to explore students' natural interest in the living world as it builds a foundation for further study of biology. The course exposes students to the vast diversity of life, challenging them to expand their concept of living things and engendering in them a respect for all forms of life. Students do at least one lab each week, learning to design experiments; make, record, and interpret observations; and collect, display, and analyze data.

Physical Science 8:

In Physical Science, students use models to plan and conduct investigations, analyze and interpret data, and construct explanations using CER (claim, evidence, reasoning) format. Through their study of chemistry, students will develop the understanding that pure substances have characteristic physical and chemical properties and are made from a single type of atom or molecule. They will be able to explain changes between states of matter, that chemical reactions involve regrouping of atoms to form new substances, and that atoms rearrange during chemical reactions. They will develop and use models to describe how the total number of atoms does not change in a chemical reaction and thus mass is conserved. Through their study of physics, students develop the understanding that interactions in matter can be explained and predicted using the concept of transfer of energy from one object or system of objects to another, and that the total change of energy in any system is always equal to the total energy transferred into or out of the system.

WORLD LANGUAGES

French 6:

This course is designed for students with little or no previous study of French. This course is designed to be an immersive environment in which students receive almost exclusive input in French. Focus is placed on helping students build the skills and confidence to navigate new and unfamiliar situations in French. There is a required textbook for this course: the EntreCultures 1 workbook, which will be used throughout all three years of middle school French. Thematic units are based on the textbook and authentic resources and materials, which will be made available to students via Schoology. In 6th Grade French, themes may include: greetings, activities, school, and family. Students are assessed at the end of each unit through the completion of a project and via Integrated Performance Assessments that evaluate students' interpersonal, interpretive, and presentational communication skills.

French 7:

Building upon the skills from 6th Grade French, this course continues to be an immersive environment in which students receive almost exclusive input in French. Focus is still placed on helping students build the skills and confidence to navigate new and unfamiliar situations in French. There is a required textbook for this course: the EntreCultures 1 workbook, which is used throughout all three years of middle school French. Thematic units are based on the textbook and on authentic resources and these materials will be made available to students via Schoology. In 7th Grade French, themes may include: family, cuisine, clothing, and animals. Students are assessed at the end of each unit through the completion of a project and via Integrated Performance Assessments that evaluate students' interpersonal, interpretive, and presentational communication skills.

French 8:

Building upon the skills from 6th and 7th Grade French, students continue developing their proficiency in interpersonal, interpretive, and presentational communication skills. Students study thematic units based on authentic resources and delivered via comprehensible input strategies. Themes may include: housing, daily routines, travel, and story-telling. The required textbook for this course is the EntreCultures 1 workbook. . Students are assessed at the end of each unit through the completion of a project and via Integrated Performance Assessments that evaluate students' interpersonal, interpretive, and presentational communication skills. Upon successful completion of the course, and the recommendation of the teacher, students will enter French II or II Honors in the Upper School.

Spanish 6:

This course is designed for students with little or no previous background in Spanish. This course is designed to be an immersive environment in which communication is almost entirely in the target language. Focus is placed on helping students build the skills and confidence to navigate new and unfamiliar situations in Spanish. A textbook (*Espanol Santillana*) is required for this course and students will continue using it throughout middle school. Students will learn about different Hispanic cultures, listen to authentic audio and video activities and participate in grammar activities designed to develop their writing skills. In 6th Grade Spanish, themes may include: greetings, activities, school, people and family. Students are assessed at the end of each unit through the completion of a project, a quiz or a test via Integrated Performance Assessments that evaluate students' interpersonal, interpretive, and presentational communication skills.

Spanish 7:

This is a continuation of the Sixth Grade Spanish program. The Spanish course at this level emphasizes oral communication. The principal focus of our text, *Español Santillana*, is on communicating a message rather than manipulating grammatical structures. This course utilizes a digital textbook edition, where grammar is presented in a gradual and logical sequence by the characters from each chapter. Presentation of real-life vocabulary encourages communication in Spanish.

Spanish 8:

Spanish 8 continues the emphasis on oral communication while further developing skills in reading, writing, and listening. At this level we present more challenging grammatical concepts, additional verb tenses, and more specialized vocabulary. The *Español Santillana* online text continues to provide content that encourages students to communicate about real life situations. It is supplemented with short story readings and student writings as well as cultural projects. The text also provides lengthy reading passages in each chapter so that the students can hone their reading and begin to practice more formal writing skills as well as further oral communication. In addition to the ebook, we also provide magazines written in the native language with current news about the Hispanic world, where students can learn, discuss and write about contemporary topics. Upon successful completion of the course, and the recommendation of the teacher, students will enter Spanish II or II Honors in the Upper School.

Latin 7:

Using Book I of *Subranni*, Latin 7 focuses on introducing students to the language and culture of ancient Rome. By the end of Latin 7, students are able to read simple Latin sentences with subjects and direct objects. Throughout Latin class, students will review English grammar and grammar terms. In addition to the Latin language, in this class students will encounter the following cultural topics: Greco-Roman mythology, daily life for working-class communities in ancient Rome, and powerful female figures throughout history. Finally, in preparation for the seventh grade signature project, Architecture Expo, students will learn about the traces of Rome that survive in modern architecture.

Latin 8:

After a review of vocabulary and grammar from Unit I (Stages 1-8), students in Latin 8 complete Unit I and advance to Unit II of the Cambridge Latin Course. In Unit II students continue to hone reading skills, increase vocabulary and expand grammar knowledge. In addition, students read Latin novellas independently, expand their knowledge of etymology, mythology and Roman culture. Highlights of the year include participating in the National Latin Exam, visiting the Walters Art Museum and engaging in friendly competition with Bryn Mawr School eighth graders during our annual Latin Day celebration in May.

TECHNOLOGY

Digital Thinking I:

Digital Thinking I is a student-centered, hands-on course that promises to engage learners while challenging them to think creatively. The course is completely in-class and project-based. As much as possible, students will use content from their other courses to use in connection with the digital skills we are learning. Students will begin the year by learning how to build their ePortfolio in Google Sites which will follow them throughout Middle School. Then, students move through units such as video production in iMovie, coding in block-based format, composing their own composition in Garageband, and creating formulas and charts in Google Sheets. Throughout the year we also constantly revisit social media and how it currently affects our daily lives including being safe, responsible and kind to others. General media literacy, search skills and typing are also sprinkled throughout various units.

Digital Thinking II:

Digital Thinking II is similar to Digital Thinking I in terms of its project-based format, but explores a different variety of programs and skills. Students will learn photo editing in Photoshop, video editing in Final Cut and 3D Drawing in Google Sketchup. Similar to DT I, we continue to discuss digital citizenship and social media throughout the year. We also expand upon the programming skills learning last year and learn to write code and develop more interactive elements. Students will continue to add to their ePortfolio and further develop media literacy and research skills. Many joint projects with other courses are intertwined to help anchor the content students are learning in other subject areas.

Yearbook 8 (8th Grade Elective):

Students work with our faculty Yearbook advisor and Upper School students to help photograph, curate and create layouts for the current year's edition. Students work first hand with software and get a taste for journalism and publications.

Coding (8th Grade Elective):

Coding is a self-paced elective in which students will explore coding and programming by working on an independent project throughout the semester. Projects may include building an app, learning a coding language, or creating a game in Scratch.

ART

Art 6:

This course offers experiences which strengthen the ability to find original solutions, nurture habits that support the artistic process, and improve on the techniques and skills of the visual arts. Using the elements of art and the principles of design as a framework, students investigate a variety of experiences and concepts – including drawing, painting, printmaking and sculpture. In building an understanding of the elements and principles of design, students will learn how this knowledge can strengthen their artwork.

Art 7:

The emphasis in the Seventh Grade Art curriculum is on exploration, analysis, and investigation of the creative process. Students develop technical skills that empower them to communicate ideas visually. They begin by exploring non-traditional ways to represent themselves and their identities. They also will learn to work collaboratively on projects such as stop motion animation. In conjunction with the grade level signature project, Architecture Expo, students will learn how to draw architecture using perspective drawing.

Art 8:

By using problem solving techniques in conjunction with imagination, students will create artwork using a variety of media. In the 8th grade, students are expected to make deeper connections between what they create and what has been made in other cultures and time periods. We will utilize multi disciplinary skills such as scale and proportion to accomplish tasks. Along with creative projects, students will culminate their art experience with a researched presentation on a female artist who has made a significant contribution to their field in order to connect art and practice to real world events beyond the classroom.

Graphic Design (8th Grade Elective):

Have you ever wondered who designed posters, billboards, album art, book covers and even your favorite juice packaging? In this elective, that will be you! We will explore pattern, text, imagery, symbolism, design principles and a variety of art medium both in the digital world and in the physical world to respond to real world graphic design challenges.

Sewing (8th Grade Elective):

Have you ever been interested in fashion design? How about bringing those designs to life? In this elective, you will get to design and construct your own creations from start to finish using sewing machines and several sewing techniques.

PERFORMING ARTS

Dance 6, 7, 8:

The primary aim of the dance classes at this level is to help students develop the skills and confidence necessary to express themselves through movement. Students concentrate on attaining basic skills in ballet and modern dance techniques. These include understanding proper body alignment, balance, posture, coordination, and isolation of major and minor muscle groups. Special emphasis is also placed on creative movement, awareness exercises, and group choreography. The year culminates in a performance to showcase the progress of the students.

Theatre 6, 7:

Primarily focused on getting comfortable with performance, this course will lead students through activities designed to foster a sense of "ownership" on the stage. In addition to learning basic technical terms and the parts of the theater, students will use improvisational games, pantomime, and short scenes to develop skills in voice and movement. The emphasis of this course is to provide a comfortable place to explore student creativity and lay the groundwork for future theatrical endeavors. Each semester culminates in a performance of a class play.

Music 6:

The Sixth Grade Music course builds on the foundation of concepts and skills established in the Lower School. The students will explore the basic elements of music notation, classification of musical instruments and expressive qualities, through singing, composing, analyzing, movement and the playing of different musical instruments. Students will play soprano recorders, boomwhackers and percussion instruments to experience performing in an ensemble setting. In addition, focused attention will be given to developing the singing voice through proper breathing and vocal techniques. Music history and exposure to a variety of instrumental repertoire and genres will be incorporated into the Music lessons.

Music 7:

The Seventh Grade Music course is designed to expand the student's musical experience and further develop the concepts of reading and understanding music notation (rhythm, melody, form) and expressive qualities as they sing, play and perform a varied repertoire of music. Students will study vocal production and refine their ability to sing in unison and in harmony with a vibrant, healthy tone with pitch accuracy. Students will also have the opportunity to create and compose original compositions using traditional and non-traditional musical notation. Students will learn to ring Hand Chimes and perform Level 1+ and Level 2 music.

Music 8:

The Eighth Grade Music course is designed to give students many opportunities to apply their basic musicianship skills to reading, creating, and performing a varied repertoire of music. Vocal production and techniques will be continued as students become acclimated to hearing and performing two and three part harmony. They will strive towards singing with a healthy, substantial, and blended sound with accurate pitch and tonal placement. Performing on Orff and World Music Drumming instrumentation students will have the opportunity to improvise melodies and rhythms within an ensemble setting. In addition, students will learn both major and minor chords on the Ukulele so they may accompany themselves while singing.

Modern Band/Songwriting (8th Grade Elective)

Students will learn how to play modern band instruments, including electric guitar, drumset, electric bass, and keyboard. They will set up sound system equipment and experience singing on a microphone. Students will use lead sheets to play select songs from a variety of musical genres such as pop, rock, jazz, country, and hip hop. After learning various song forms, they will write original music and lyrics to be performed together as a band.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Physical Education 6, 7, 8:

The Middle School Physical Education program combines a general overview of sport skills and wellness components. Age appropriate activities are introduced and incorporated in each class activity. The focus for each student is to increase her knowledge and understanding of good health, wellness, and the skills and rules that govern a variety of sports and games. Yearly activities include individual and team sports, opportunities for students to teach and learn games from their classmates, and group problem-solving activities that originate from the Project Adventure Outdoor Education philosophy.

ECHOES

Echoes is a course offered to students as individualized instruction, meeting in small groups, to teach an enrichment of study skills as needed by the individual students. Learning styles and learning differences of the students are taken into consideration during the planning of the curriculum. Examples of study skills included in the curriculum are reading comprehension (determining main ideas and supporting details), reading techniques for reading from a textbook versus reading a novel, writing skills including organization of ideas using the software program Inspiration, exposure and expansion of a vocabulary base, note taking through summarization and paraphrasing, memorization through use of mnemonic devices, and any specific need relating to the student's current curriculum content.

SIXTH GRADE SEMINAR

Sixth Grade Seminar is designed to help students transition to middle school at Garrison Forest. Throughout the course, students will work on a series of projects designed to develop the learning habits identified by teachers and students as important for middle school, including collaboration, curiosity, creative and critical thinking and perseverance.

CAPSTONE

The semester-long 8th Grade Capstone Course empowers students to explore their passions and “ideas worth sharing” through personal reflection and intentional, in-depth research. The project is broken up into three sections: Discover, Develop, and Share. Each section contains a set of Explorations that contain discussion, thought, and activity prompts designed to help students build presentation literacy and public speaking skills. The course culminates with each student’s own TED-style Talk in a showcase for the Middle School and Garrison Forest community.

DECISION MAKING

Life Positive 6:

This Sixth Grade course provides an opportunity for students to strengthen areas of a young person’s personality that will later enable her to make healthy choices about a variety of issues related to personal growth. Emphasis is placed on teaching students new skills in communication, problem solving and relationship building. Topics include:

- Trust
- Decision-making & Core Values
- Peer pressure
- Assertiveness
- Cliques/Relational Aggression
- Effective Communication, Social Media
- Stress Management/Time Management
- Feelings Identification
- Self-Esteem/Empathy
- Identity and Individuation
- Family Systems

Discoveries 7:

In this Seventh Grade Life Skills class, the main focus of the first semester is health and wellness. The studies include discussion about nutrition, self-esteem, and general health. Students are encouraged to share their own feelings while learning to negotiate the environment around them. Factual information is presented with opportunities for discussion, in-class activities, and special projects.

Crossroads 8:

This course is designed to provide Eighth Grade students with an opportunity to explore their personal values, the people and institutions that have influenced their values and, most importantly, how to put those values into practice. As students prepare for Upper School a number of topics and guest speakers are introduced as education and prevention for preparing them for increased independence. These include:

- Uniqueness
- Diversity/Stereotypes
- Value systems
- Understanding your own voice
- Physical and Emotional Safety
- Reproductive Health/Body Image
- Relationships – Healthy and Unhealthy
- Decision making and role modeling
- HIV Education/Risk behaviors/Alcohol/Drugs
- Social Networking
- Insight into yourself/transition to Upper School

Middle School Faculty 2023-2024

Shannon Schmidt*

Head of Middle School

Lauren Misera Anderson '02

Assistant Head of Middle School
History

Dante Beretta

Latin

Janet Blatchley

Mathematics

Stephanie Boteler

Administrative Assistant

Sydney Carter '11

Mathematics

Alexandra Charney

Music

Tricia Dabrowski

Physical Education

Pamela Dorman

Middle School Counselor

Natalie Drutz*

Art

Emily Fisher

Librarian

Rebecca Harris

Science

Lindsay Kelland

Middle School Digital Learning Specialist
Chair, Instructional Technology

Stephanie Leary

English

Alexandra Long

History

Heather Malone-Wolf

Dance

Chair, Performing Arts Department

Kathleen Mest

English & History

Megan Miller*

Latin

Emma Parsons

Academic Resource Coordinator, English
Chair, Academic Resource Department

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Spanish

Shawn Rowley*

Theater

Kimberly Salabsky

French

Nedria Walker*

Science

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**On-Campus Faculty*