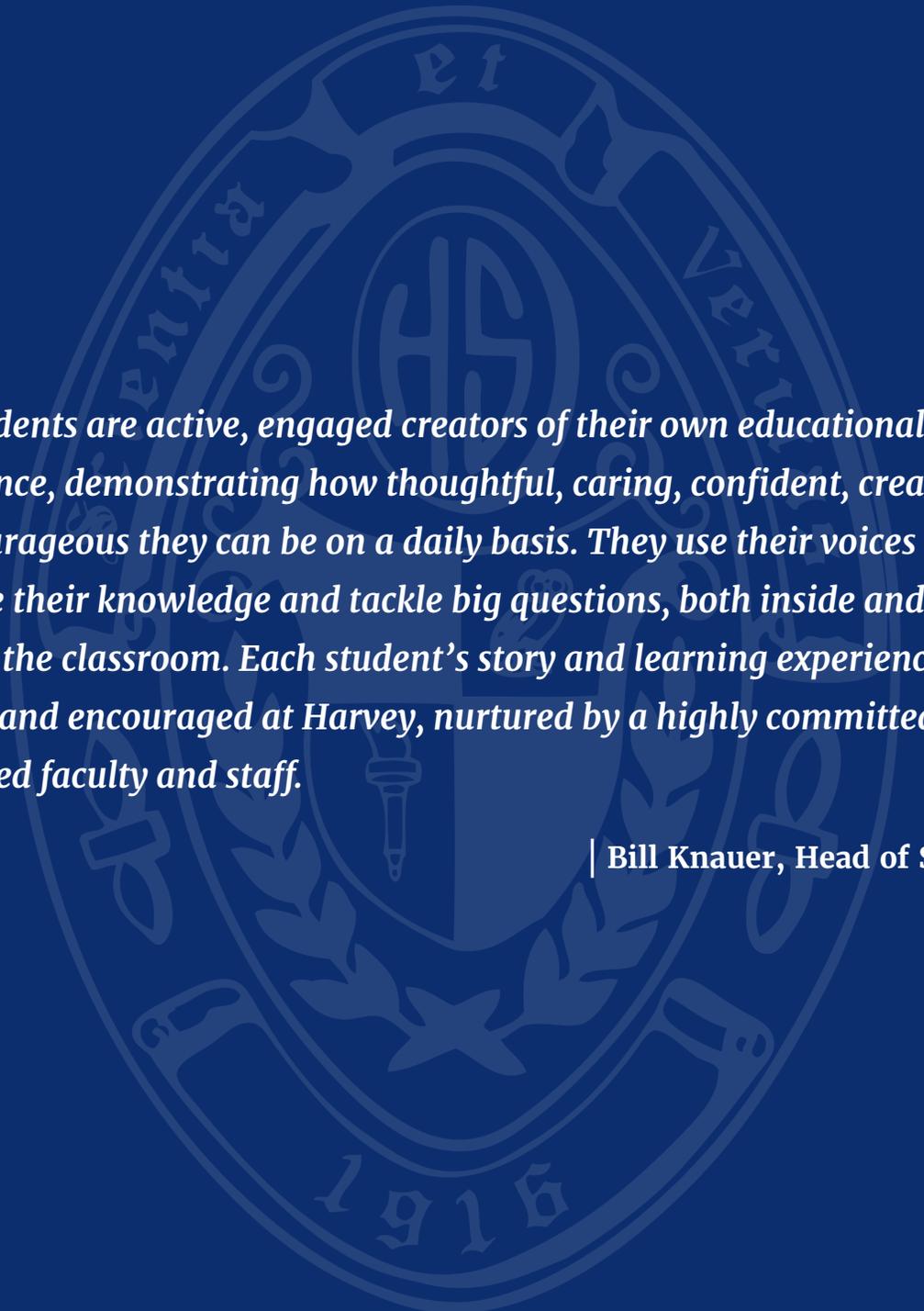


THE HARVEY SCHOOL

Rigor with Heart



2023 – 2024
Middle School Program of Study
Academic Overview & Course Descriptions



“ Our students are active, engaged creators of their own educational experience, demonstrating how thoughtful, caring, confident, creative, and courageous they can be on a daily basis. They use their voices to share their knowledge and tackle big questions, both inside and outside the classroom. Each student’s story and learning experience is unique and encouraged at Harvey, nurtured by a highly committed and dedicated faculty and staff. ”

| Bill Knauer, Head of School

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OUR PHILOSOPHY

Where the Whole Student Thrives

At The Harvey School, we realize that each of our students brings a blend of talents and abilities that contributes to the uniqueness of our school. To help students realize their potential, we ask our faculty members to bring out the best in each of our students so that they discover their strengths, develop confidence in their own abilities, and reach their highest level of academic achievement.

Attentive, knowledgeable, caring teachers seek the right mix of encouragement, support, discipline, and challenge to help students experience success within our school and as members of society. Small classes, averaging 10 students, are a major feature of the School, allowing our teachers to work closely with each student. Faculty members help students develop skills and master the content in their courses. Innovative teaching methods combine with the use of cutting-edge technology to help our students thrive.

We encourage exploration and critical awareness of other cultures and traditions. We believe that to be successful as individuals, students must gain self-confidence and self-mastery, as well as learn social responsibility. Teachers are expected to be role models and guides, both in and out of the classroom.

Each student has their own contribution to make. Graduating from Harvey means that our students have not only found a level of academic success and are well-prepared for college, but they also know how to behave honorably and responsibly in society.

ACADEMICS at HARVEY

Academic Year and Grades

The school year is divided into fall, winter and spring trimesters, each approximately 12 weeks long. Each trimester consists of two marking periods. At the midpoint of each marking period, progress reports may be sent to parents indicating a student's improvement or need for improvement in a particular course. Examinations are given at the end of the fall and spring trimesters, and students are assigned projects to be completed before the end of the winter trimester. Teachers generally hold review periods before each exam, which are two hours in length.

Grades are given at the end of the marking period. Trimester and year grades appear on the transcript.

There are five letter grades:

A (superior accomplishments) through D (a minimal understanding of the essentials), and F (no credit)

There are five effort-related grades:

4 (superior effort) through 0 (no discernible effort)

Homework

Homework is an essential part of the academic process. The School encourages students to budget their time so that some homework can be completed during the school day. However, most students can expect to spend some time at home working on assignments. To assist students, all teachers post homework assignments on an academic website.

Extra Help

Extra help is a cornerstone of the Harvey academic program. Although it is a student's obligation to seek additional help when needed, a teacher also may require a student to meet during study halls or other free periods.

Honors

Academic achievement is recognized at the end of each marking period. Students who earn a 3.3 grade-point average and have no grade lower than a B- (2.7 weighted) are named to the Honor Roll. Students who earn a 3.7 average with no grade lower than a B (3.0 weighted) are named to the Head's List. Students on the Head's List whose averages are 4.0 or higher are designated as Cavalier Scholars and receive a special certificate.



Technology: The Krasne Project

The Krasne Project, named for Emeritus Trustee Charles A. Krasne, provides cutting edge technology to students and teachers alike, in order to best prepare Harvey students for a rapidly advancing world and workplace. The project's chief goal is to allow faculty to create new and innovative programs, using the newest technology, and get that technology into student hands as quickly as possible, sometimes in just days. The project provides the latest computers, Chromebooks, iPads, 3D printers and lab equipment. Robotics, Video Production and Graphic Arts are just a few of the academic programs that are available as a result of the Krasne Project.

MIDDLE SCHOOL at HARVEY

Middle school represents a bridge from the intimate settings provided by elementary programs to the more rigorous of the high school years. Therefore, our Middle School seeks to provide a developmentally appropriate academic program that is both challenging and empowering for young adolescents. It offers an engaging learning environment that encourages students to reach their potential in a broad range of academic and extracurricular pursuits. Middle School faculty members develop skills in students that will help them succeed in high school and beyond. Communication, critical thinking, problem-solving, and collaboration are all areas of focus. Our teachers work diligently to understand the individual learning styles and natural strengths of their students so that they can bring out the best in each of them. Intellectual development takes place by presenting an integrated course of study that focuses on key content areas. Interdisciplinary work is an important aspect of the Middle School curriculum that allows learning to take place across multiple disciplines as students study relevant themes and topics.

INSTRUCTION AND ASSESSMENT

At Harvey Middle School, we believe that how we teach is as important as what we teach. We prepare students for continued academic success; perpetuate their love of learning; and inspire them to reach their potential in a stimulating learning environment. Our curriculum balances innovation and tradition, is responsive to the changing world, and is delivered by a faculty who are gifted, attentive, and dedicated to every child's learning experience. Approaches to instruction may include critical exploration, differentiation, project-based learning, inquiry-based instruction, scaffolding, and service learning.

The Middle School uses both summative and formative assessments that are purposefully planned, measure student progress, inform instruction, and maximize learning. Formative assessment provides continuous insight into a student's comprehension and happens while teaching is underway, creating an ongoing stream of information. Summative assessment fulfills the more formal approach of measuring student progress or mastery of a subject at a particular moment. These assessments are measured against expectations set by the teacher, the department, and by best practices in the field.

A typical Middle School academic program includes the following:

Sixth Grade

English
Math 6
Science
Geography
Spanish
Art, Music, Wellness
Electives

Seventh Grade

English
Pre-Algebra/Algebra
Science
Early America & Government
Spanish
Art, Music, Wellness
Electives

Eighth Grade

English
Pre-Algebra/Algebra
Science
America & the World
Spanish
Art, Music, Wellness
Electives

ENGLISH

The English curriculum develops thinking and language together through discussion and emphasizes students' ability to communicate in a clear, coherent manner. This communication encompasses reading, writing, listening, and speaking. An integrated approach to instruction allows students to learn and develop these skills centered on a theme or work of literature. Whole class shared novels and independent reading enhances vocabulary and grammar instruction. Multicultural voices are introduced through short stories, poetry, nonfiction works, and plays. Writing instruction is based on the Six Traits of Writing model, which includes ideas, organization, voice, sentence fluency, word choice, and conventions.

ENGLISH 6

Students study developmentally appropriate novels, short stories, nonfiction, myths, and poetry. Instruction and class discussions encourage students to examine ideas related to theme, plot, character, conflict, and setting. Grammar and vocabulary skills are taught using an integrated approach. Throughout the year, students are introduced to strategies found in the Six Traits of Writing, focusing on organization and conventions. Written responses encourage them to transfer their thoughts to paper and develop the use of the narrative, expository, descriptive, and persuasive styles of writing. Literature selections may include *The Wednesday Wars*, *A Long Walk to Water*, *Freak the Mighty*, and *El Deafo*. A highlight of the year includes an interdisciplinary study of the Hudson River Valley.

ENGLISH 7

This course further develops students' reading, writing and communication skills. Students use resources such as Write Source and the Elements of Literature to support written responses to discussions and literature. In addition, the Six Traits of Writing supports the writing process, with increased emphasis on sentence fluency and word choice. Literary analysis and discussion accompany the reading of both traditional and contemporary pieces of literature, including *The Outsiders*, *Stargirl*, *Ties That Bind*, *Ties That Break*, and *Bronx Masquerade*.

ENGLISH 8

English 8 continues to develop and refine the reading, writing, and communication skills developed earlier in middle school. Students use advanced versions of Write Source and the Elements of Literature, 3rd Course. Higher-level thinking is supported through discussions and written responses to universal themes, plot development, character analysis, and critical reading for literary devices. Students explore short stories, dramatic writings, poetry, non-fiction, and both traditional and contemporary novels. Literary selections include *Revolution of Evelyn Serrano*, *The Contender*, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.



MATH

Middle School mathematics guides and challenges students as they transition from concrete thinking to abstract and conceptual reasoning. During these years, students learn the process of mathematical thinking along with the fundamentals that inform it, developing valuable analytical and problem-solving skills. Students are placed in the math class that will provide an appropriate level of instruction. The goal is to encourage students to be successful math learners as they gain the various levels of mastery and independence. Across the math curriculum, instruction highlights abstract and quantitative reasoning, problem-solving, real-life application, and implementation of tools and strategies.

MATH 6

Math 6 focuses on building and supporting the strong foundational skills of mathematics. Daily lessons and investigations are carefully sequenced to incrementally develop a spectrum of skills and other concepts. Units that are covered during Grade 6 include number operations, proportionality, expressions, equations, geometry, and measurements. A coherent and focused progression builds from each unit to the next over the course of the year.

PRE-ALGEBRA

The Pre-Algebra curriculum allows the student to move from the concrete concepts of arithmetic to the abstract concepts of algebra. Daily lessons concentrate on automating the concepts and skills of arithmetic. The basic concepts of algebra are also introduced. Sequenced lessons require students to practice and apply previously learned skills. Practice problems provide a comprehensive review and continued practice of skills learned in arithmetic. Topics studied include fractions, decimal numbers, exponents, area, volume, perimeter, integral exponents and integral roots, geometry, proportions, percentage, ratio, graphs, positive and negative numbers, variables, solving equations, and graphing inequalities.



ALGEBRA 1

This is a fundamental course covering the properties of number systems, factoring and its applications, simplifying and combining fractions, functions and graphs, algebra in a plane, and equations with real number solutions. Sequenced lessons require students to practice and apply previously learned skills. Topics covered include linear equations, inequalities, polynomials, factoring, applying fractions, and quadratics. This course prepares students to move on to math in the Upper School.

LANGUAGES

All students entering Grade 6 are required to take one year of Latin. The study of Latin has proven to equip students with a strong understanding of vocabulary and language that leads to success in other subjects. Latin also provides an overview of Ancient Rome and Greece, the cultures upon which our modern societies are based. Students In seventh and eighth grade may continue with the study of Latin or move on to study Spanish. The Middle School places students in the most appropriate language class, allowing them to be successful and to gain levels of excitement and enthusiasm toward learning and mastering the subject.

INTRO SPANISH

This introductory Spanish course is designed for students who have minimal experience with the language. It reinforces the four basic language skills of reading, writing, speaking, and listening. It also aims to improve student appreciation of Spanish-speaking cultures. Students will learn common vocabulary terms and phrases, participate in simple conversations, and develop the confidence to move on to the next level of Spanish. Multiple resources including digital and multimedia are used to support student learning.

SPANISH 1

This class is designed for students with prior experience in learning Spanish. More challenging vocabulary and phrases will be emphasized and students will engage daily in conversational Spanish. Continued emphasis will be placed on appreciating Spanish-speaking cultures and understanding the growth of these cultures in America and beyond.

SPANISH 2

This class, mainly, conducted in Spanish, reviews and expands upon the grammar and vocabulary presented in previous years. Students study expressions, verb conjugations, direct and indirect pronouns, and sufficient vocabulary to support their continued growth, and oral and written expression. Additionally, students continue to learn about various cultural and historic aspects of the Spanish-speaking world.

Note: Two years of a foreign language beyond the Middle School level is a graduation requirement for the Upper School. The Upper School offers Latin, Spanish, and Japanese.



HISTORY

The Harvey Middle School history curriculum aims to equip students with an understanding of what it means to be a citizen in their communities, in our country, and in an increasingly interdependent world. By providing them with an awareness of community, country, and world, we hope to prepare them to emerge as global citizens. Instruction in these classes revolves around inquiry, decision-making, curiosity, and interdisciplinary applications. We recognize that this is a crucial time to help our young people understand what it means to be actively engaged in the democratic decision-making process.

HISTORY 6: GEOGRAPHY

This course begins with a focus on local geography and history. The goal is for students to have a sound understanding of the history and geography of the communities in which they live. Considerable attention is given to the Hudson River Valley as part of an interdisciplinary unit. As the year unfolds, students explore world cultures and the geography of various regions of the world. Class discussions focus on cultural achievements, economic factors, and the religious affiliations of countries and geographic regions. Students study political and physical maps, participate in group projects, and complete journal writings to enhance this experience. Students' understanding of the material is evaluated through assessments, writing activities, and daily homework assignments, in addition to a research project on a specific culture and country.

HISTORY 7: EARLY AMERICA & GOVERNMENT

This course provides students with an overview of the Native American experience, colonization by the early European settlers and the western expansion. Significant time is devoted to the Revolutionary War and all the causes and implications of this moment in history. The fundamental principles of American government are studied, including an emphasis on the executive, legislative, and judicial branches. Students are also expected to become familiar with the political leaders in their own communities and understand the election process. Field trips to local government sites such as courthouses and police stations support these efforts. Expository writing instruction and research skills are points of emphasis throughout the year.

HISTORY 8: AMERICA AND THE WORLD

After a review of early 19th century topics, such as expansion and slavery, students focus, in more detail, on the Civil War, Reconstruction and the development of American culture and the economy as a result of the Spanish-American War. The course also concentrates on the beginning of the 20th century, exploring the decisions made by the United States at home and abroad. This includes a study of the World Wars and the political decisions made by world leaders. In addition, students learn about the problems and the decision-making processes of America's late-20th century presidents. Notable projects include a 1960s assignment and a Black History Month presentation. The ability to express oneself verbally and in writing is important in this class, and students are expected to make use of primary and secondary sources.



SCIENCE

Middle School science introduces students to broad disciplines of the subject including life science, earth science, and physical science. The curriculum supports and challenges students' intellectual curiosities by providing them opportunities to complete inquiry-based labs and hands-on experiments. Teachers also take advantage of the School's campus to explore plant life, geology, and animal life. Additionally, field trips to local reservoirs, Pound Ridge Reservation, Norwalk Aquarium, and Museum of Natural History support in-class instruction. Science in the Middle School emphasizes hands-on, differentiated, inquiry-based practices that create "aha" moments for students.

SCIENCE 6:

In the sixth grade, science instruction includes an in-depth study of life science and physical science. Students are introduced to cell structure and function, reproduction, adaptation, and ecosystems. Physical science topics include the study of heat, matter, motion, light, sound, and color. Sixth graders end the year by studying, building, and launching rockets on campus.

SCIENCE 7:

Seventh grade science builds on the physical science and earth science concepts learned in the sixth grade. Students begin to understand and connect the unifying concepts of scientific thought, in addition to making observations and practicing scientific inquiry. Topics include weather, Earth and space, waves, rocks and minerals, and animal/plant structure. The year ends with a unit devoted to biology. Students also study and participate in the dissection of selected organisms.

SCIENCE 8:

Eighth grade science continues to build on the study of physical science, chemical science, and life science. Students understand and connect the unifying concepts of scientific thought, in addition to making observations and practicing scientific inquiry. Topics include matter, physical and chemical change, elements, compounds, the Periodic Table, and bonding. Additional topics include light and heat, transmission of light, photosynthesis, chromatography of plants' pigments, solar energy, chemistry, and the study of elements and compounds. The academic year ends with a unit devoted to the study of biology, human anatomy and physiology.



PERFORMING ARTS, FINE ARTS & ELECTIVES

ART:

Art is designed to help students develop artistic and cultural awareness, develop imagination, perception, and skill, and fosters creativity, self expression, confidence, and discipline. Students will explore their inner and outer worlds using the visual arts as a means of expression and will be introduced to new media and new ways of visualizing. Projects include spatial designs, masks, color mixing, abstract painting, pattern design and drawing as a way of learning. Students will have their completed artwork displayed throughout campus and during exhibitions. All students participate in art class throughout the year.

CERAMICS:

This class teaches students the basics of ceramics, and they have the opportunity to learn a variety of techniques through different projects. Students utilize different tools and glazing techniques, and they will be introduced to the craft of wheel-thrown pottery. Introduction to traditional and contemporary ceramic arts will be incorporated into the classroom experience.

PERFORMING ARTS & WELLNESS:

This course uses elements of the performing arts to build communication skills, social-emotional awareness, and character development. Students will also develop skills in the areas of collaboration, public speaking, and nonverbal interactions. Activities may include improvisations, monologues, and group work. The wellness component is designed to give students the opportunity to understand the factors and choices that promote a healthy and balanced life. Nutrition, breathing, yoga, and meditation will support this understanding.

CHORUS:

Students enhance their ability to sing in tune, sing harmony, read music, and interpret music. Participants perform in the winter and spring concerts; other performance opportunities may arise. The choral program is closely connected to the music program and students of all experiences and abilities are encouraged to become involved.

MUSIC:

Instruction focuses on the evolution and development of music. Students listen to and learn about a variety of genres spanning the history of music. The fundamentals of learning to read music are covered and students are given frequent opportunities to play and experiment with instruments. This course also incorporates singing and performance, which will encourage students to participate in the choral program. Students wishing to pursue instrumental study in greater depth may sign up for lessons. All students participate in music throughout the year.

BAND:

Students who have had some prior experience with an instrument collaborate in studying age-appropriate works. The program provides opportunities for collaboration and individualized instruction while enhancing intonation, rhythmic accuracy, dynamics and tonal blend. The band performs at both the Winter Concert and Spring Concert.



DANCE:

Students must demonstrate the focus, discipline, and maturity to collaborate and be receptive to instruction. Participants will have the opportunity to perform in a dance concert at the conclusion of the winter term. This elective is offered during the winter term, and students must receive teacher permission to participate.



CINEMA STUDIES:

Students learn about the history of film and analyze elements of movies. Themes such as “the hero’s journey” and “coming of age” are discussed. Techniques related to cinematography, directing, and acting are highlighted. A focus of the elective is to enhance student appreciation of the art of filmmaking. This elective is offered in the winter trimester.

CURRENT EVENTS:

Students explore the events that are taking place in our ever-changing world. As students become familiar with relevant issues impacting our world, they may share opinions and participate in discussions and debates. The class encourages students to broaden their perspective of the world in which they live and see themselves as global citizens. Students are expected to share their thoughts and be respectful of the opinions of others.

DEBATE:

Students develop skills related to public speaking and communication. Debate topics related to current events and student interests are studied, researched, and discussed. Instruction related to argument and response are areas of focus. Students have the opportunity to participate in debate competitions with other schools in the region. Extensive time and preparation takes place prior to the debate competitions, which often take place on weekends.

FASHION:

This elective covers figure drawing and design, while giving students the opportunity to explore and create their own fashion aesthetic. Students learn to use different media and techniques that are used by fashion designers. This elective is offered in the fall and winter trimesters.

PLAYWRITING:

In this class, students experience the process of writing an original one-act play. In a collaborative, writer’s circle-style environment, students outline, develop, and complete their own short story play. On reading days, students share their work as well as offer constructive feedback to their peers. The class concludes with an official reading of each play. This elective is offered in the fall trimester.

PUBLICATIONS:

This class provides students with the opportunity to develop and collaborate on several publications, including the newspaper, The Rambler, and the literary magazine, Equinox. Students also share writings and recordings on our podcast. This elective is offered in each trimester.

ROBOTICS:

Students have the opportunity to construct and operate mini-robots using kits that vary in levels of sophistication. Collaboration, creativity, and design are all areas of focus. Students may become involved in VEX robotics, which leads to interscholastic competitions. Students may also participate in robotics as an after-school activity during winter. This elective is offered in the fall and spring trimesters. The Middle School’s robotics team has been recognized at both the regional and international level for its work.

SCENE STUDY:

Students perform scenes from different genres of plays throughout the course of this class. For each scene, they execute scene and character analyses that influence the choices they make on stage. The class explores several different techniques for actors to use in rehearsal. Students have informal performances throughout the term. This elective is offered in the spring trimester.

Other Aspects of Middle School Academics:

STUDY SKILLS:

All sixth grade students are enrolled in a study skills program that meets multiple times each week to support organization, time management, assessment strategies and other skills that ensure students successfully transition into middle school.

INTERDISCIPLINARY UNITS:

Middle School teachers often collaborate to focus student learning on a central theme or topic. Community, country, and world are themes that are introduced in sixth grade and emphasized throughout middle school. For example, the Hudson River Valley is a subject that is studied across discipline areas and each grade level studies the subject through a different lens. Research indicates that interdisciplinary work makes learning more meaningful for young adolescents. This work is supported by creative projects and field trips.

STUDY HALL/EXTRA HELP:

Every student has a study hall that is scheduled into their academic schedule. Study halls are proctored by teachers and provide a valuable opportunity for students to complete homework and connect with teachers for extra help. Given that students are involved with activities on campus until 4:45 p.m. each day, they are expected to use study hall time productively. Extra help in the Middle School is a time for students to connect with teachers outside of the classroom experience. Teachers may initiate extra help with students, but in developing as self-advocates, students are expected to also initiate these moments as they progress through middle school.

TECHNOLOGY:

The Middle School embraces the use of technology to enhance learning. All students have access to chrome-books in every classroom. This allows students to use devices in a responsible manner only for academic purposes. The main academic platform that is used for accessing and posting assignments is Canvas, which can also be viewed by parents who wish to support their child's learning at home.

SPEECH CONTEST:

In alignment with our school's ongoing emphasis on communication and public speaking, each year the English department sponsors a schoolwide Speech Contest that begins with every student choosing a topic and presenting a short speech before their English class. Based on the quality of their content, form, and presentation, two or three students are chosen from each class to progress to the semifinal competition. During that round, students make their presentations before the entire English faculty, who select approximately 15 speakers for the final round. The culmination of the contest is a formal event held before the entire school, as well as family and guests. Outside judges choose a Middle and Upper School winner. The recipients of these awards are presented with the Wells Speech Cup at the end of the school year.

POETRY RECITATION CONTEST:

Each spring, students at Harvey are required to memorize and recite a poem for their English class for entry in the Michael Lopes Poetry Recitation Contest, an annual competition that helps develop an appreciation for poetry throughout the school. Several students are selected from each class to compete in the semifinals of the competition, which is judged by the English faculty. The final competition, which is presented before the entire school, includes the works of many budding poets and makes for an exciting event.

GEOGRAPHY BEE:

All Middle School students participate in a spelling bee, which begins with a preliminary written round and finishes with an oral competition that continues until a winner is determined. Students can also participate in the annual National Geography Bee as an activity. Students from our Middle School have annually qualified for the Nationals.

SUMMER READING:

In English, the year begins with an assessment of the summer reading assignment. Each student participates in class discussions and then completes a writing assignment in response to the summer reading. Summer reading allows classes to begin the year having studied and reflected upon a common work of literature. This assignment is considered an important launching step into the English curriculum for the year.

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