



Barack and Michelle Obama Middle School Program

Saint Paul Public Schools is committed to providing a successful middle school model to support students during an important time of transition in their lives. We believe that all students deserve a middle school experience that is developmentally responsive, challenging, empowering and equitable.

Similarities between the Montessori Model and Middle School Model

Like the Montessori model, the middle school model is centered around a team of teachers and advisors who work together to meet the social-emotional and academic needs of students.

SPPS Montessori Model	SPPS Middle School Model
Focuses on educating the whole child.	Provides student-centered teaching for grades 6-8. Teachers from four core subject areas (math, science, reading/writing and social studies) instruct the same group of students throughout the school day.
Students learn at their own pace.	Teachers collaborate as a team to meet the social-emotional and academic needs of a common group of students.
Develops social emotional skills.	Teachers, counselors, social workers and support staff work together to provide students with lessons that help them manage peer conflict, friendships, bullying, stress and anxiety.
Maintains high academic expectations.	Academics include rigorous core and elective courses, and college and career readiness programs.
Pride in the diversity of students.	Every student is supported for who they are and who they hope to become by honoring and celebrating their culture, race, ethnicity and gender.
Strong Writer's Workshop so students can work at their own instructional level.	Middle schools strengthen English Language Arts (ELA) curriculum that expands Writer's Workshop to 6th grade.
Foundational relationships with teachers and classroom communities.	Foundations is an advisory class to help students transition from elementary to middle school by building a community of support among students and their teacher. This caring environment supports students as they focus on academic achievement, digital citizenship, social-emotional learning, and college and career topics.
Cultivates interests and natural abilities.	Students experience elective classes where they gain skills, pursue their interests and have fun. Classes typically include the arts, physical education, health and world languages.

The Obama Middle School

Obama Middle School will support students who learn best in an environment that engages learners through their hearts, hands and minds.

Core Values

- **Independent learners:** Supports students who are experienced in choosing activities that engage their curiosity and builds the skills of students who are new to independent learning. **Emphasizes deep learning that stretches students' minds.**
- **Positive relationships with self, peers and educators:** Creates a sense of belonging, **respect, and community** to the school and peers. All students are truly accepted, and unique diversity is a strength of the community.
- **Collaborative learning:** Students work together to grow and learn.
- **Hands-on learning:** Students use project-based learning to build skills, learn concepts, and apply critical thinking for real-world learning.
- **Connections to the natural world:** Students experience the natural, outdoor world to support their learning.
- **Service to community:** Students grow to be responsible leaders **and mentors** who give back to the K-8 school community.

The Learning Space

- **Small learning community:** Capped at 150 students per grade, students are connected to a small learning community.
- **Flexible learning spaces:** Updated facilities are designed to accommodate a wide range of learning and instructional experiences.
- **Community partnerships:** The community is invited to become partners to build relationships and support student learning. Parent involvement is welcomed and encouraged through the PTO, volunteer opportunities, and family events.
- **Grade-level cohorts (groups):** Each grade is housed on its own floor to create a space for each grade to build community.

Your Feedback

As you think about middle school:

Questions	Responses
What do you value in education for your students?	
What experiences is your family looking forward to in middle school?	
What is important to you in the transition to middle school from elementary school?	
We know the school community is important. What are your hopes and dreams regarding your students' connection to a learning community in middle school?	