



## MIDDLE SCHOOL CURRICULUM GUIDE



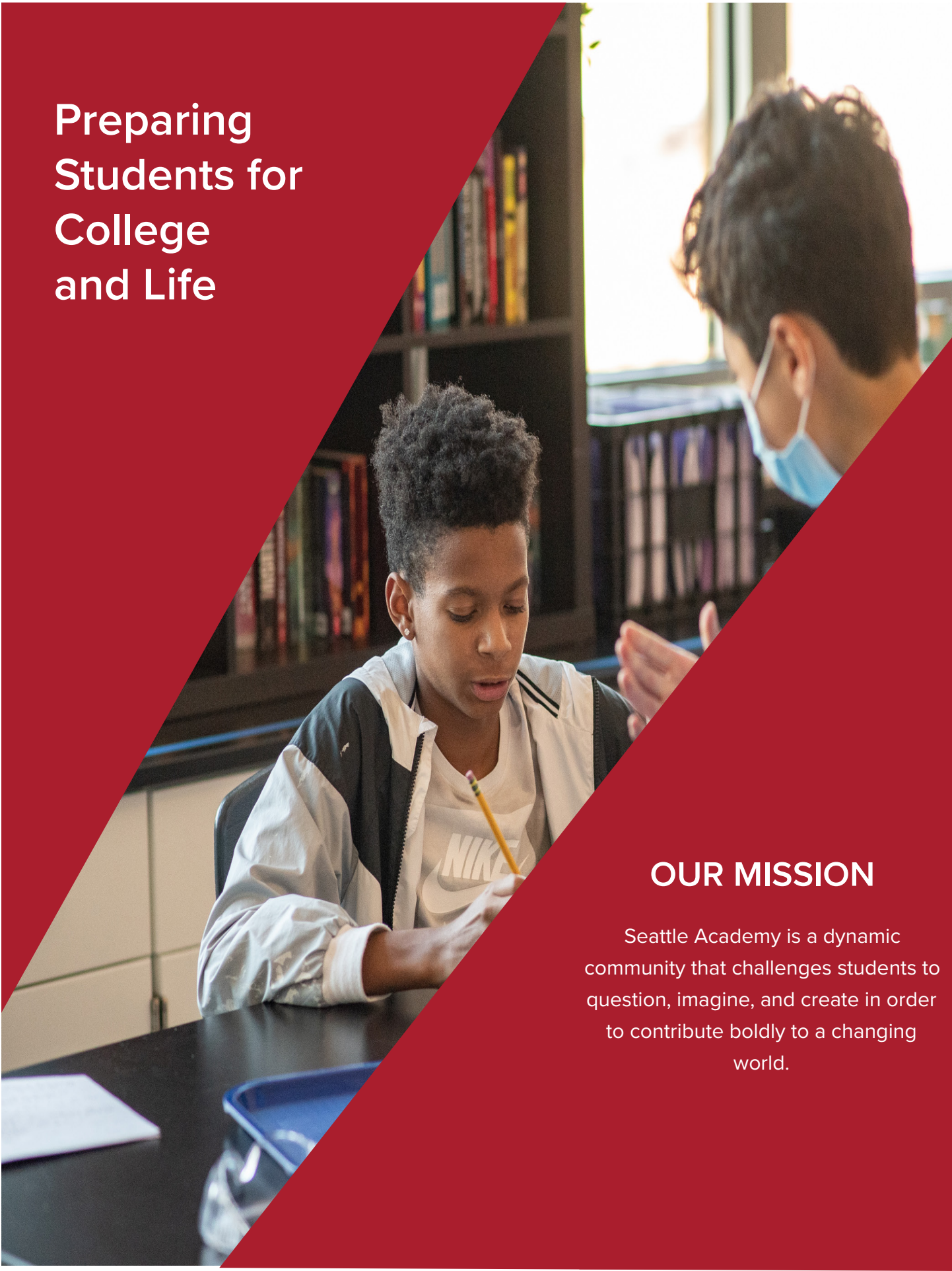
**2024-2025**

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Registration Information

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Course Descriptions



# Preparing Students for College and Life

## OUR MISSION

Seattle Academy is a dynamic community that challenges students to question, imagine, and create in order to contribute boldly to a changing world.

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## Purpose of the Curriculum Guide

Our Middle School Curriculum Guide is designed to help SAAS parents and students understand the curricular offerings in the Middle School. Our hope is that our curriculum engages kids through the application of skills, habits of mind, and habits of action in the pursuit of solving real-world problems. These applications, paired with rich opportunities for exposure to arts, athletics, technology, trips, and participation as a member of a community, are vital in serving our kids and our mission. Our philosophy aims to do four primary things: Conduct learning in a culture of performance, educate our students with a timeless and contemporary curriculum, build strong and trusting relationships, and facilitate character development.

### Registration

Students register online in the spring with the help of the Office of the Registrar and Middle School Division Team. Math and World Language placements are made in consultation with the Math and World Language faculty and are finalized in the spring.

Incoming 6th graders will get to decide if they would like to take year-long Instrumental along with PE or choose the arts rotation, which is one trimester each of Music Theater, Dance, and Visual.

7th & 8th graders will select from a range of choices in the arts and are placed in art and PE classes based on their preference and availability while taking into consideration the level and complexity of the schedule.

### Schedule/Course Changes

Once the schedule has been made, math placements are secured, and their World Language has been selected (current 6th graders for the 7th-grade year), it can be extremely difficult to change a student's schedule during the year. Please carefully consider your world language preference and your art sequence when choosing.

## Grading Policy

Letter grades are based on a grading scale that includes (+) plus and minus (-) grades. A(4.0), A-(3.7), B+(3.3), B(3.0), B-(2.7), C+(2.3), C(2.0), C-(1.7), D+(1.3), D(1.0), D-(0.7), F(0).

Pass grades are not figured into the grade point average. High Honor Roll is a GPA of 3.75 and above. Honor Roll is a GPA of 3.45 to 3.74.

### Washington State History Requirement

This course is completed in the 7th grade year at Seattle Academy and usually completed in the 7th or 8th grades at other institutions.

### Washington State History Requirement

This course is completed in the 7th grade year at Seattle Academy and usually completed in the 7th or 8th grades at other institutions. This is a Washington State graduation requirement, and if not taken during the middle school years, students will be enrolled in a Washington State History course in the spring trimester of their senior year.

### After School Study Hall

We offer a no-cost, supervised after-school study hall program that provides a quiet study environment for a maximum of twenty students per day from 3:00-5:30 PM, Monday through Friday. Students are expected to work quietly. Computer access will be available for those students who need it and at the discretion of the proctor. Study hall is drop in; no advanced sign up is required.

### Attendance

To report your child absent or late, please log in to the parent portal in Veracross and click update attendance. You can also email [msattendance@seattleacademy.org](mailto:msattendance@seattleacademy.org) or call the main school line at 206-323-6600. You can refer to our Student/Parent Handbook located on the Seattle Academy website for more information.



Student Schedule

Seattle Academy's academic year is divided into three trimesters. Students will take five year-long core academic courses (English, History, Math, Science, World Language/Study Skills, one of the Innovations Distribution Requirements each trimester and then two elective courses (arts and PE) each trimester. Below is an example of a 6th grade schedule.

	ODD FWD	EVEN FWD
8:15-9:30	History 6	English 6
9:30-9:40	TRANSITION	
9:40-10:55	Science 6	Foundations of World Language
10:55-11:05	BREAK	
11:05-12:20	PE 6	Innovations 6
12:25-1:10	LUNCH	
1:10-1:45	COMMUNITY TIME	
1:45-3:00	Math 6	Visual 6

	ODD RVRS	EVEN RVRS
8:15-9:30	Math 6	Visual 6
9:30-9:40	TRANSITION	
9:40-10:55	PE 6	Innovations 6
10:55-11:05	BREAK	
11:05-12:20	Science 6	Foundations of World Language
12:25-1:10	LUNCH	
1:10-1:45	COMMUNITY TIME	
1:45-3:00	History 6	English 6

INNOVATIONS DISTRIBUTION

This table illustrates the new course areas that have become part of our Innovations Distribution. Students are placed in these courses and do not need to register for them. They will take one course per trimester.

Grade	Trimester	Trimester	Trimester
6th	Leadership 6	Innovations	Computational Thinking
7th	Health	Innovations	Rhetoric
8th	Health	Financial Literacy	Computational Thinking

## Daily Schedule

The main school buildings open at 7:30 AM. Classes begin at 8:15 AM and end at 3:00 PM.

The daily schedule is a "block" schedule. Below is an example of our block schedule for 2023-2024. Courses are assigned to time "blocks" (class periods = time blocks: 1-8). Blocks are 70 minutes long and are on an even/odd rotation. When a day is missed, the day students return will continue the sequence.



## 2023-2024 DAILY SCHEDULE *MIDDLE SCHOOL*

	ODD 1	EVEN 2	ODD 7	EVEN 8
8:15-9:30	BLOCK <b>1</b>	BLOCK <b>2</b>	BLOCK <b>7</b>	BLOCK <b>8</b>
9:30-9:40	<b>SNACK</b>			
9:40-10:55	BLOCK <b>3</b>	BLOCK <b>4</b>	BLOCK <b>5</b>	BLOCK <b>6</b>
10:55-11:05	<b>BREAK</b>			
11:05-12:20	BLOCK <b>5</b>	BLOCK <b>6</b>	BLOCK <b>3</b>	BLOCK <b>4</b>
12:25-1:10	<b>LUNCH/RECESS</b>			
1:10-1:40	<b>COMMUNITY TIME</b>			
1:45-3:00	BLOCK <b>7</b>	BLOCK <b>8</b>	BLOCK <b>1</b>	BLOCK <b>2</b>

## CALENDAR OF AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

Below is a listing of activities that are offered after school. **It is important for students to note that the schedules for the after-school activities in the chart below overlap and conflict with each other, so students need to choose one activity per season.** Questions about individual options or conflicts should be directed to the Athletics Director.

### Participation and Excellence

All programs represent the school's philosophy of Participation and Excellence. Sports teams have turn-outs for placement, to ensure that all students have access to programs and can participate at their appropriate level. In sports, for example, sports teams have CYO, Red, Black, Grey and additional teams when needed.

FALL	WINTER	SPRING
Soccer	Basketball	Tennis
Girls' Volleyball	<i>After-School Clubs (TBD):</i>	Golf
Cross Country	<i>Bouldering, Open Studio,</i>	Lacrosse
<i>After-School Clubs (TBD):</i>	<i>Robotics,</i>	Ultimate
Adventure, Bouldering,		Track and Field
Open Studio, Robotics		<i>After-School Clubs (TBD):</i>
		<i>Adventure, Open Studio,</i>
		<i>Robotics</i>

# 2024-2025 COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

## Arts

Seattle Academy Middle School has a broad selection of arts course offerings. We have outlined arts courses by grade. All arts courses listed are one trimester except for Band which is a yearlong course.

### 6th Grade Arts Curriculum

The 6th Grade arts curriculum is a unique introduction to the full array of arts offerings at SAAS. Students will take courses in Dance, Visual Arts, Theater, and Music throughout the year. Students have the opportunity to take Band as a yearlong class, and if a student chooses the yearlong Band class, they must then choose between taking the other arts classes or taking PE (instead of other arts classes).

#### Dance 6

Dance 6 is a trimester course designed as a general introduction to dance. During the trimester, students explore basic concepts and principles of dance, such as isolation and rotation of body parts, dancing in canon, etc. In addition, students work to develop a basic vocabulary of connective steps which will be performed in a variety of patterns. The class culminates in a tightly choreographed production number which will be performed in front of an audience at the end of the trimester. During this course, performance skills are taught in addition to techniques for memorizing choreography.

#### Visual 6

Visual 6 is a one-trimester class where we focus on building a visual language and developing a sense of joy in the process of making and exploring personal voice. Students will become familiar with different mediums and a range of materials as we introduce the Elements and Principles of Design. Students will work

on reinforcing their motor skills and hand-eye coordination by drawing objects from life. We prepare them to be members of the studio and set up practices for maintaining the studio, supplies, and space.

#### Music Theater 6

This is a one-trimester course designed to familiarize students with elements of both music and drama. Students will learn several songs in the course of the trimester in a wide variety of styles, including contemporary choral, pop, and Broadway. Drama skills will be addressed and developed through creative dramatics, improvisation, and theater games. The trimester culminates in a musical performance at the end-of-tri concert.

#### Band 6

6th Grade Band is a yearlong class for either beginners or those with experience. Students either continue or start on saxophone, trumpet, trombone, clarinet, flute, percussion, or bass. There are two concerts during the year, as well as end-of-tri performances and opportunities to play in the Drum Line. Students work with professional specialists weekly throughout the year in pull-out sessions in addition to the ensemble class time.

### 7th Grade Arts Curriculum

All 7th grade students select three single-trimester courses from options in Dance, Visual Arts, Theater, and Music. Students are able to select from options in each category.

#### Dance 7

This course is a beginning-level dance class that culminates with a final dance performance at the end of the trimester. Students will learn to identify and talk about a variety of dance styles and develop the ability to learn and perform movement sequences with musicality



and technical proficiency. Students will also be asked to explore and demonstrate four main elements of dance: body, space, time, and relationship. Our work will highlight community and collaboration, physical education, social and emotional learning, cognitive engagement, and joyful movement.

### **Visual 7**

Visual 7 is a one-trimester class where we continue to build on the skills gained in Visual 6. Students will begin to think more about their personal voice and reflecting the world around them. Students will explore both 2-D and 3-D projects with a range of materials as we continue to focus on the Elements and Principles of Design.

### **Middle School Musical**

*Open to 7th & 8th graders*

Students will rehearse and perform a workshop production of selected songs, dance numbers, and scenes from a major musical. The cast is split into smaller ensembles which will focus on different numbers. The full company performs at least one large musical number together. Some principal roles are double cast, which allows more students to experience larger roles. Our workshop production uses projections to communicate time and place, neutral costumes to allow for flexible casting, and narration to tell the story and tie numbers together. The focus in rehearsal and performance is on developing the dance, vocal, acting, and ensemble skills required to tell a truthful and engaging story in the musical theater genre. Attendance is required the week before Mid-Winter Break and Production Week, which includes after-school technical rehearsals and performances.

### **Production 7**

This is a one-trimester course in which students will rehearse and perform a production of a one-act play. This play will be selected for the group of actors enrolled in the class. Near the end of the trimester, there will be two public performances of the play. In the course of production, students will learn and apply performance skills, such as vocal projection, memorization, and physical characterization.

Special emphasis is placed on effective communication and storytelling.

### **Improvisation 7**

Through fun theater games and exercises, students will explore the building blocks of improvisation and sharpen their improvisational skills. Students will practice their ability to play “in the moment,” make and accept offers, and will work together to create characters in compelling situations.

### **Tech Theater 7**

Middle School Technical Theater class combines lectures, group discussions, and hands-on learning to expose students to opportunities in the diverse fields of entertainment design and technology. Major points of focus include theater and workshop safety, technical personnel and their roles, theatrical design and construction techniques, theater control systems, and practical aspects of production.

### **Vocal Ensemble 7**

This class is about creating music with a group of singers. Students will learn several songs in a range of styles, from concert choral music to pop and Broadway. Special emphasis is placed on blend, phrasing, and harmony to create a satisfying musical experience for the singers and the audience. This is a one-trimester class, culminating in a concert at the end of the term. This group may also perform at other school functions such as Open House and End-of-Tri.

### **Band 7**

7th Grade Band is a yearlong class for those with experience or those willing to take private lessons as they catch up. There are two concerts during the year as well as end-of-tri performances and opportunities to play in Drum Line. Students work with professional specialists weekly throughout the year in pull-out sessions in addition to the ensemble class time.

## 8th Grade Arts Curriculum

All 8th-grade students have the opportunity to take a trimester of Visual Arts, Music, and a Theater option. Students are able to select from options in music and theater courses.

### Visual 8

Visual 8 is a one-trimester introduction to digital mediums where we focus on building an understanding of visual language with a focus on developing 21st-century skills. Building on the student's knowledge of the Principles and Elements of Art, this class centers on digital art production, including digital still-image making and video and animation production. Students have a great deal of freedom in exploring several media-making applications and focusing on what captures their individual interests. More than just learning how to use these tools, the Visual 8 curriculum also emphasizes how to adapt to the ever-changing world of technology as critical thinkers and creative problem solvers.

### Middle School Musical

*Open to 7th & 8th graders*

Students will rehearse and perform a workshop production of selected songs, dance numbers, and scenes from a major musical. The cast is split into smaller ensembles which will focus on different numbers. The full company performs at least one large musical number together. Some principal roles are double cast, which allows more students to experience larger roles. Our workshop production uses projections to communicate time and place, neutral costumes to allow for flexible casting, and narration to tell the story and tie numbers together. The focus in rehearsal and performance is on developing the dance, vocal, acting, and ensemble skills required to tell a truthful and engaging story in the musical theater genre. Attendance is required the week before Mid-Winter Break and Production Week, which includes after-school technical rehearsals and performances.

### Production 8

In this one-trimester course, students will

rehearse and perform a short play. Working together as an ensemble, students will explore how to bring a dramatic text to life with their bodies, voices, and imaginations. The class culminates with two public performances at the end of the trimester.

### Improvisation 8

This course explores the building blocks of improvisation through improvisational games and short-form improvisations. Students will learn key improvisational skills like working from impulse, building each other up, making and accepting offers, building stories together, and looking for ways to raise the stakes. Students will also learn strategies for what to do when they are blocked or stalled on stage.

### Tech Theater 8

Middle School Technical Theater class combines lectures, group discussions, and hands-on learning to expose students to opportunities in the diverse fields of entertainment design and technology. Major points of focus include theater and workshop safety, technical personnel and their roles, theatrical design and construction techniques, theater control systems, and practical aspects of production.

### Vocal Ensemble 8

This class is about creating music with a group of singers. Students will learn several songs in a range of styles, from concert choral music to pop and Broadway. Special emphasis is placed on blend, phrasing, and harmony to create a satisfying musical experience for the singers and the audience. This is a one-trimester class, culminating in a concert at the end of the term. This group may also perform at other school functions like the 8th Grade Moving Up Ceremony.

### Music Production 8

The one-trimester Music Production class helps students work together to write, record, and compose original music. The class takes place in a recording studio setting where students will use digital audio workstations and outboard recording equipment to produce and record

their songs. The curriculum covers basic audio engineering, introduction to music theory, and song composition.

### **Band 8**

8th Grade Band is a yearlong class for those with experience or those willing to take private lessons as they catch up. There are two concerts during the year as well as End-of-Tri performances, 8th Grade Moving Up, and opportunities to play in Drum Line. Students work with professional specialists weekly throughout the year in pull-out sessions in addition to the ensemble class time.

## **Computational Thinking**

### **Computational Thinking 6**

*One trimester*

Students will develop skills in logic, planning, and troubleshooting through creating games and animations in code. Using Scratch, a block-based programming platform, students will create a series of creative projects based around different computer science concepts such as loops, variables, and objects, all while practicing feedback, abstraction, and problem decomposition. Students will learn how to troubleshoot their work even while frustrated and will be encouraged to infuse their creativity and personal expression into their projects.

### **Computational Thinking 8**

*One trimester*

Students will develop their logic, planning, and troubleshooting skills by creating games and animations in code. Students will use an online platform to refine their skills using the Python language. The class is project-based, with each project focused on different computer science concepts such as loops, variables, and functions. Students will practice feedback, abstraction, and problem decomposition and will learn how to troubleshoot their work even while frustrated. In addition to the requirements for each project, students are encouraged to develop and expand the concept to their own interests and goals, challenging them to consider how a concept can be applied in multiple contexts.

## **English**

The Middle School English curriculum asks students to explore essential questions we believe all students should consider to prepare for college and life. Students examine these questions through reading, writing, and discussing a broad range of texts, including fiction, non-fiction, poetry, plays, graphic novels, short stories, science fiction, and fantasy. The Middle School English program focuses on teaching students to hone their ability to develop strong claims based on strong evidence. By giving students complex questions and diverse texts, we consistently ask students to think critically and apply their skills in new contexts. Students will learn to be active readers by annotating passages that help answer the essential questions as they read. Students will also engage in daily seminars and writing activities to build their understanding of the text and cultivate their ability to listen and respond to others' ideas. Middle School English emphasizes collaborative learning, recognizing that all student voices are valuable to our individual and shared understanding of the texts and our world.

### **English 6**

*Yearlong*

English 6 starts with the individual sense of self and then explores how individuals shape society. The year starts by asking students to consider what keeps people from being themselves before looking at how individuals, communities, and society as a whole decide right from wrong. Lastly, students are asked to examine leadership and explore how people fight for freedom through both non-fiction and fictional texts. Students will learn the annotation system used throughout middle school to help students build and demonstrate their understanding of the text. English 6 focuses heavily on persuasive writing, developing students' ability to write claims, select strong evidence for their claims, and explain evidence clearly. Students will also practice these skills in seminars as well as develop the ability to create their own discussion questions.

## English 7

### *Yearlong*

English 7 builds on the skills and questions of English 6, asking students to think more broadly about what makes a just and successful community. Students start by considering how we know where we belong and then exploring the nature of power and justice. These themes are explored congruently with History 7, which covers American history. Students will continue to develop their independence in persuasive writing, working on more complex sentence structures and analysis of their evidence. Students will also build an awareness of literary devices as part of a poetry unit and have the opportunity to analyze and leverage these tools in their own writing.

## English 8

### *Yearlong*

As students prepare for high school, English 8 asks students to revisit many of our existing themes with increasingly complex texts and depth to envision how they want to contribute to a new community. We begin by asking what we owe each other, exploring the concept of the social contract such as unwritten rules that govern society. Students consider why societies have rules, which rules should be followed, and the ways that rules affect our daily lives. Building on this question, we return to right and wrong, considering the ethics of various decisions from individual interactions to large-scale social movements. English 8 writing focuses on refining the style of their persuasive writing, giving students more tools to engage the reader and convey more nuanced claims and analysis. In the spring, students research and write their own non-fiction article on a topic of their choice to practice making expertise accessible and experimenting with more freedoms in structure, tone, and style.

## Financial Literacy

### Financial Literacy 8

#### *One trimester*

Students learn the knowledge, skills, and habits needed to be financially responsible citizens

as they become more independent. Over the course of the trimester, students will reflect upon their own value systems and discover how those values might impact their financial decisions. They will gain a foundational understanding of budgeting, savings, income, and cost of living through discussions, activities, and projects.

## Health

### Health 7

#### *One trimester*

7th grade Health continues the exploration of topics that contribute to physical, emotional, and mental well-being for our Middle School students. The following topics are covered in 7th-grade Health: Immune System Structure and Function, Disease Prevention, Cardiovascular System Structure and Function, CPR/AED Training, Healthy Relationships, Social Media Safety, Sex Ed (Puberty, Reproductive System Structure and Function, Sexual Orientation & Gender Identity, Reproduction, Pregnancy, Contraception, STIs, Consent). Material is presented using a variety of means, including guided discussion, books, videos, written reflection, role-playing, research projects, building models, guest speakers, and case studies.

### Health 8

#### *One trimester*

8th-grade Health dives deeper into topics from previous years to provide content that will encourage students to develop healthy behaviors and habits that will serve them well throughout life. The following topics are covered in 8th-grade Health: Nervous System Structure and Function, Adolescent Brain Development, Substance Use, Mental Health, Healthy Relationships, Comprehensive Sexuality Education (Reproductive System Structure and Function, Sexual Orientation & Gender Identity, Reproduction, Pregnancy, Contraception, STIs, Consent). Material is presented using a variety of means, including guided discussion, readings, videos, written reflection, role-playing, research projects, building models, guest speakers, and access to resources.

## History

### History 6

#### *Yearlong*

History 6 is a civics and civic engagement course focused on developing students' familiarity with government systems and how they can interact with and influence their communities. The course includes components of history, civics, and contemporary issues. Students will learn about what government is and how it works, about the founding of the United States government, and consider what people have done and what they can do when they disagree with what the government is doing. In doing so, they will engage critically with topics of justice and injustice in our country's past and present. Students will encounter and analyze a variety of perspectives, like and unlike their own, and feel empowered to take meaningful and informed action in their worlds. Along the way, they will explicitly learn foundational literacy and historical thinking skills, such as strategies for making meaning from nonfiction texts, expressing their own position in the form of a historical claim, and thinking, writing, and speaking using evidence and reasoning. The course culminates in a research project focusing on a "changemaker" who the student finds inspiring.

### History 7

#### *Yearlong*

History 7 is a course on Pacific Northwest history. In this course, students learn about the past and present of their home community, Washington State and its surroundings, as well as how the region fits into the broader history of the United States. The course includes components of history, civics, and contemporary issues. Students will learn content such as local civics and the expansion of democracy over time, the tribal nations who have lived in what we now call Washington since time immemorial, and the contributions of the many groups of people who have arrived in Washington since the 19th century. They will also learn about World War II, the Holocaust, and the impact of the internment of Japanese Americans as framed by a local context. Importance will be placed on reading and discussing primary source documents

to develop a complete understanding of events. In addition, the class will reinforce key skills of argumentative writing, close reading, annotations, culture of performance, and seminar engagement skills. This course fulfills the WA State History requirement.

### History 8: Global Systems

#### *Yearlong*

In 8th grade Global Systems, students use geography and current events to study the systems that exist in our world. They apply lenses of understanding like geography, economics, politics, and culture to build a more sophisticated sense of how those systems impact people's lives. This gives them a toolkit of social studies vocabulary to apply through textual analysis and research projects. This includes things like a unit on reading and creating maps, a unit on research investigation and "push/pull" factors that led to global migrations, and case studies of how climate impacts different groups in a particular city. Key skills developed include ongoing focus on analytical writing supported by evidence and assessing the reliability of academic sources. Students will also consider multiple viewpoints on a topic and decide which are most persuasive based on evidence as they work to build a more thoroughgoing analysis of evidence in their writing.

## Innovations

### Innovations 6

#### *One trimester*

Students will engage in a trimester-long project that will explore the design thinking process through hands-on activities. This will include creating viable solutions to a problem that exists within their immediate community. They will be guided through the steps of problem identification and solution creation, and the class will culminate in a presentation of their project and reflection on their learning about human-centered design.



## **Innovations 7**

### *One trimester*

Students are challenged to observe problems in the world and innovate possible solutions through an iterative process revolving around human empathy. They will ask and seek to answer the essential questions: "Using the design thinking process, how can I design a solution for a particular user that might have needs and preferences different from mine?" Inherent in the design thinking process are practicing skills of flexibility, problem-solving, and frustration tolerance. Success in this process will require giving and receiving feedback on projects and making more revisions than you think you need. Design thinking is a hands-on process that is both fun and challenging.

## **Leadership 6**

### *One trimester*

Leadership 6 focuses on helping students identify and develop the skills and habits of empathetic leadership, and to collaborate on projects designed to build an inclusive community. We want students to develop the skills, including the social and emotional skills and awareness, that will allow them to contribute meaningfully to their communities at SAAS and beyond. By developing a deeper understanding of themselves and how they interact in and build community, students can grow their leadership capacity and apply their strengths for positive impact.

## **Mathematics**

## **Math 6**

### *Yearlong*

Math 6 focuses on developing a deeper understanding of the manipulation of numbers in various applications. Students work to strengthen their number sense, mathematical reasoning, justification, and problem-solving skills. Students also practice group work and collaboration alongside note-taking and autonomy in the math classroom. Throughout the year, we cover content that includes topics ranging from fractions, percents, and decimals to ratios, proportions, operations, and integers. Students

get exposure to variables, expressions, and equations to prepare them for Pre-Algebra in their next year of math.

## **Pre-Algebra 6**

### *Yearlong*

Students placed in this course demonstrate strong problem-solving skills, number sense, and mathematical reasoning when entering 6th grade. In this course, students apply their understanding of numbers to more abstract concepts with variables. The goal of Pre-Algebra is for students to develop a foundational fluency with variable expressions, equations, inequalities, and functions. Alongside these mathematical skills, we work to develop collaboration, notetaking, autonomy, and resilience in Middle School math.

## **Pre-Algebra Concepts**

### *Yearlong*

Pre-Algebra concepts in 7th grade focus on developing a conceptual understanding of new topics that lay the groundwork for Algebra while supporting and strengthening students' number sense, operation fluency, and perseverance in solving multi-step problems. Within this class, students will have the opportunity to learn new concepts like solving equations and inequalities, graphing on the coordinate plane, and analyzing linear functions. While exploring these new concepts, students are also supported to strengthen their foundational understanding of ratios, number manipulation, fractions, integers and order of operations. The goal of Pre-Algebra Concepts is to empower each student to grow as a mathematician, increase confidence, cognitively engage with the content, make connections, and build on the math that they have already mastered.

## **Pre-Algebra 7**

### *Yearlong*

Students placed in this course demonstrate strong problem-solving skills, number sense, and mathematical reasoning when entering 7th grade. In this course, students apply their understanding of numbers to more abstract concepts with variables. The goal of Pre-Algebra

is for students to develop a foundational fluency with variable expressions, equations, inequalities, and functions. Alongside these mathematical skills, we work to develop collaboration, notetaking, autonomy, and resilience in middle school math.

## **Geometry**

### *Yearlong*

Geometry allows students to apply their knowledge of Pre-Algebra topics to visual representations of two and three-dimensional figures. Students classify and describe shapes in terms of congruence, similarity, and transformations as they explore angles, lines, triangles, quadrilaterals, circles, and solids. Throughout the course, students will develop their reasoning, measurement, and construction skills, and they will use coordinate geometry to further their understanding of linear functions in preparation for Algebra.

## **Algebra 8 Concepts**

### *Yearlong*

Algebra Concepts in 8th grade focuses on developing a conceptual understanding of new topics that are essential components of the Algebra 1 curriculum while supporting and strengthening students' number sense, operation fluency, and perseverance in solving multistep problems. Within this class, students will have the opportunity to learn new concepts like quadratic functions, exponents, and linear systems. While exploring these new concepts, students are also supported to strengthen their foundational understanding of integers, fractions, expressions, and equations. The goal of Algebra Concepts is to empower each student to grow as a mathematician, increase confidence, cognitively engage with the content, make connections, and build on the math that they have already mastered.

## **Algebra 1**

### *Yearlong*

Algebra 1 explores solving linear equations and inequalities, exploring their patterns as functions, and moving between their different representative forms. Students extend their

understanding of manipulating expressions, solving equations, and graphing functions to polynomials and quadratic equations. Students use a variety of technologies to strengthen conceptual understanding. The goal of this course is to develop their ability to abstract patterns, analyze data, and understand multiple representations.

## **Accelerated Algebra 1**

### *Yearlong*

Accelerated Algebra 1 is a course designed for students who are ready for more rigor and a faster pace. In addition to covering the same topics as Algebra 1, the Accelerated Algebra 1 course explores some additional topics related to absolute value equations, functions, radicals and exponents, quadratic functions, and systems. In this course, students will gain a deep understanding of linear and quadratic equations and functions. *Open to students who have passed the Accelerated Algebra 1 readiness assessment and have received teacher approval.*

## **Math Lab**

### *Yearlong*

Math Lab is designed for students who need more support in the form of a personalized curriculum for mathematics. Each class has no more than five students, and the curriculum is uniquely designed to meet the needs of each student. Math Lab teachers tailor content from the Math 6, Pre-Algebra 7, and Algebra 1 content to extract the essential topics and explore them in depth with a variety of visuals, manipulatives, and practice. The goal of the class is for each student to progress in their understanding of foundational math concepts and re-enter the full math classes when ready.

## **Physical Education**

## **Physical Education 6-8**

### *Yearlong*

Middle School Physical Education (PE) provides all students with the opportunity to develop and maintain good levels of fitness through a

variety of games and other traditional and non-traditional PE activities. All students are expected to participate to the best of their abilities and to encourage and support the participation of others. Students will work towards competence in a wide variety of body movements and physical skills and will gain a working understanding of the rules and regulations for each activity in the curriculum, such as Ultimate, Krell ball, 4-square, handball, and target games. Within major units, alternative activities are interspersed to provide a break from the traditional games.

Through experience, individual and group feedback, and occasional reflection, students will learn how to play in groups. Students will play in ways that are inclusive and recognize that everyone has a unique role to play and contributions to make. Collaboration is encouraged just as much as competition. Rules, boundaries, and expectations are in place to help keep everyone safe and create a level playing field. Self-awareness and self-control are central aspects of helping students learn how to make a positive contribution to the group experience. Conflicts are inevitable in play, and we always work to help students resolve them together and in a way that benefits everyone involved, taking responsibility for their own words and actions as well as hearing other points of view. Students will also engage in a wide variety of fitness activities each week, including running and other cardiovascular exercises, muscular strength and endurance-building exercises, stretching, balance, and agility activities.

## Rhetoric

### Rhetoric 7

*One trimester*

Rhetoric is a single-trimester course that focuses on the development of communication, research, and persuasion skills in order for students to become effective speakers and writers. Students will be introduced to the concept of rhetoric through the use of rhetorical appeals. They will

learn to identify and analyze the use of these appeals in both writing and oratory and then apply them to their own speeches. Over the course of the trimester, students will practice a variety of speech styles, including storytelling, persuasive, and expository. An additional focus will be placed on teaching students the importance and value of both active listening and formulating and defending a position.

## Science

### Science 6

*Yearlong*

In Science 6, we take an interdisciplinary, inquiry-driven approach to examine larger questions about the social and ethical implications of what we learn. In examining larger questions about the natural world, students practice role-playing while investigating a variety of topics through lab activities, media analysis, engineering design processes, seminar-style discussions, analytical writing, debates, and civic action activities. Students leave 6th-grade science understanding what it means to be a steward to their environment. In each unit, students address an anchoring event with essential questions. With a year-long curriculum that gives them a foundation in ecology, chemistry, policy, and current local environmental issues, 6th graders end their year with the young reader's edition of *The Omnivore's Dilemma* and discuss the ethical implications of the food we eat. All of their practice in role-play, research, data collection, and discussion comes to a close with a two-day debate that is judged by a panel of guest experts.

### Science 7

*Yearlong*

During 7th grade, students will focus on physical, earth, and space sciences while incorporating Design Engineering throughout the year. The year begins with an exploration of force and motion with a heavy focus on design engineering, followed by units on both sound and light. We then explore the laws of physics

through the lens of space sciences, studying seasons, the moon, and the classification of objects in the solar system. Our year ends with a look at forces within Earth and how they shape the land and affect life. We learn about the geologic time scale, plate tectonics, and explore our local geology as it relates to earthquakes and volcanoes. These various branches of science are investigated through hands-on discovery, experimentation, reading, writing, discussion, research, and presentations. Our focus is on building students' skills in modeling, investigation, analysis, evidence-based explanation, problem-solving, and collaboration.

## Science 8

### *Yearlong*

In Science 8, students explore life from the microscopic to the complexities of the human immune system. The course focuses on the life sciences in which we will examine life on the cellular level, Mendel's genetics, evolution, and human organ systems. Students will define life and study its complexities while incorporating inquiry and project-based learning. Students will participate in hands-on labs, collaborative learning, performance-based assessments, and self-guided research. In each unit, students address an anchoring event with essential questions. With a year-long curriculum that gives them a foundation in biological science, 8th graders end their year with a student-directed investigation into a topic and a school-wide symposium in which students exchange their results and ideas to the community.

## Study Skills

### Study Skills 6-8

Students work on individually identified goals based on their own specific learning profile. The small group setting allows students to work collaboratively with peers and receive individual support from their teacher. Initial emphasis is on developing habits for tracking assignments, time management, willingness to ask for and accept help, and metacognition.

Once students have established regular habits around turning assignments in on time, higher order study skills are introduced. Rather than a separate study skills curriculum (i.e., stand alone unit on note taking or mnemonic memory strategies), students are learning to apply these skills to their current coursework from their content area classes. Study Skills is a small group, fee-based, elective class. To enroll as a new student in this class, parents meet with the Director of Learning Support to determine if placement is desired. Once a supplemental contract for Study Skills has been signed, a student is scheduled into a Study Skills class. Students receive support for executive functioning, as well as additional content support. As with all electives, students receive an elective credit and a grade for this class and students can take it for multiple trimesters. In Middle School, students can take Study Skills in place of Latin/World Language, PE, or Art.

### Who is Study Skills for?

Students who typically enroll in a Study Skills class are ones who benefit from high frequency, individualized support for a variety of reasons: Students who need help with organization and time management Students who need help with managing stress

Students with specific learning differences who need help in learning how to utilize their accommodations and developing individualized learning strategies to work around their specific areas of challenge

Students who need help with making connections in the curriculum or need more guided practice in doing reading, writing, or math assignments. Students who are waiting for developmental maturity to catch up and need help managing expectations of a fast paced and demanding academic environment

Please contact [Jess Claesson](#), Study Skills Department Chair if you have questions or are interested in learning more about the program.

## World Language

### **Foundations of World Languages: Grade 6**

#### *Yearlong*

Language study in the 6th grade combines content knowledge with metacognitive practice and prepares students for continuing studies in both English language arts and modern language. The 6th-grade Foundations class has three goals: to introduce the foundations of grammar and language study, to strengthen students' understanding of and facility with English, and to foster a love of words and their meanings. By the end of the Foundations class, students have developed linguistic skills that will enhance both their modern language and their English studies.

### **Modern Languages: Grades 7 and 8**

#### *Yearlong*

Beginning in 7th grade, students have the opportunity to study French, Mandarin Chinese, or Spanish. The language that students choose will remain their language of study until the completion of Middle School. In Upper School, students will have the opportunity to choose a new language. Students continuing their language studies in Upper School will be placed according to their proficiency level.

The vast majority of 7th graders will take Level 1A of French, Mandarin Chinese, or Spanish. In 8th grade, students progress to Level 1B of their chosen language. Students with significant prior knowledge of a language are encouraged to study a new language in Middle School.

### **Typical World Languages Course Sequencing in the Middle School:**

**6th grade:** Foundations of Languages

**7th grade:** Level 1A French, Mandarin Chinese, or Spanish

**8th grade:** Level 1B French, Mandarin Chinese, or Spanish



## APPENDIX A: ADVISORY AND PARENT TEACHER CONFERENCES

### ADVISORY

In the Middle School, students are assigned a new advisory group and faculty advisor each year of their Middle School experience. Advisors work closely with grade-level teachers, coordinators, counselors, and administrators, to act as a clear conduit of information and support between school and home. In addition to going through orientation and opening days as a group, advisory meets everyday. There are monthly Middle School and grade level meetings. During advisory lessons, faculty advisors lead curriculum for social-emotional learning and equity and inclusion. Curriculum is chosen and tailored to each grade-level appropriate experience and incorporates topical school community conversations and real world events. Through the CASEL Social Emotional Learning framework, students develop competencies in Social Awareness, Self Management, Responsible Decision Making, Relationship Skills, and Social Awareness.

Some advisory time is used informally, to connect and check-in, but also to clean out binders, stay up-to-date on work and remain organized. Activities include announcements, sharing highs and lows from the week, writing in gratitude journals, and playing games together. Advisors also use this time to individually check in with students and help facilitate any support plans that are needed. Our goals for Advisory are to create an opportunity for students to feel connected to a small group (10-12 same-grade students) of peers within the larger school community, and to provide a safe space for students to reflect and share. Each faculty advisor works to build a unique advisory culture so that their group feels a sense of belonging to something special.

#### **For students, faculty advisors:**

- Act as a student advocate
- Help students navigate their own experiences
- Foster student social-emotional growth
- Offer organization strategies and support
- Strategize solutions for students to resolve differences with teachers and peers
- Connect students with the resources they need to be successful
- Serve as the first line of communication; answer questions
- Connect families with resources within the school
- Coordinate academic and support plans
- Provide insight into your student's day to day experience at School including understanding each student's overall academic and social-emotional well-being

## PARENT/GUARDIAN TEACHER CONFERENCES

We believe that Middle School is a time for students to address their own strengths and areas for growth at school and to begin to learn to self-advocate. Therefore, students attend parent-teacher conferences. Advisors work with students to properly prepare them for conferences. This is a great time for both teachers and parents to share information with and about their students and for students to speak to their experiences.

- Parent/Guardian conferences are required for all 6-8th grade students.
- Middle School conferences are twenty minutes in duration and will take place in person in the fall trimester. Middle School conference sign ups will take place via Veracross in the parent portal.
- Advisors, students and family member(s)/guardians attend the conference. Conferences in all middle school grades may also include one other faculty member or administrator who teaches or knows the student.
  - In 6th grade, parent/guardians meet with the advisor for the first ten minutes. The 6th grade student is invited to participate in the second half of their conference.
  - In 7th grade, students are present for the entire conference and help facilitate.
  - By 8th grade, our goal is to have students lead their own conferences.

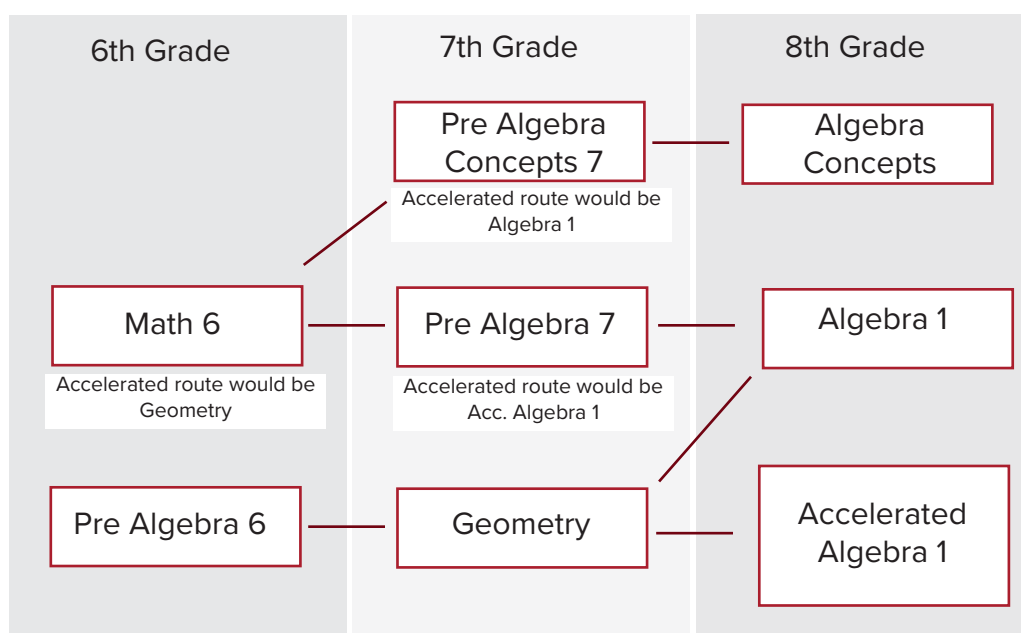
During the conference families should expect to:

- Hear directly from their student as they reflect on the Fall trimester;
- Gain and share perspectives and insight into their student's learning;
- Develop an understanding of how skills are developing across disciplines;
- Generate short and long term goals to meet their student's needs;
- Review examples of student work;
- Receive information about available support mechanisms.

## APPENDIX B: MATH COURSE OFFERINGS: MIDDLE SCHOOL

Below is a visual representation of course sequences for math.

Our goal is to provide a math class that meets each student's needs by strengthening gaps in learning, teaching, new content, and challenging student thinking while constantly assessing and re-assessing student understanding.





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