



MIDDLE SCHOOL
COURSE CATALOG

2026-2027

2026-2027 COURSE CATALOG

Grades 6-8

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WELCOME

Welcome to St. Croix Lutheran Academy!

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

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

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

Blessings,



Brad Essig
Principal

ACCREDITATION

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

- Accredited by Minnesota Non-public School Accreditation Association (MNSAA)
- Accredited by Cognia (formerly Advanced Ed)
- Member of MinIndependent

MISSION / OVERVIEW

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

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

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

SCLA is a member of the Minnesota State High School League (MSHSL) and Skyline Conference, which includes area public, private, and parochial schools. About 75% of students participate in at least one of over 50 co-curricular activities including three seasons of athletics, leadership teams, student clubs, and service groups.

Our athletic complex includes one of the best tracks in the Twin Cities metro area, a football/soccer field, practice fields, baseball and softball diamonds, tennis courts, a gymnasium, and weight room.

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

In 2025, the Tektōn Building was dedicated to house SCLA woodworking programs and an expanded space for athletic practices.

MISSION STATEMENT

Educating the total student

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

PURPOSE

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

CORE VALUES

Biblical World View	We believe that the Bible is God's unchanging truth, the foundation for all learning and life, and the message of God's saving grace for all.
Lifelong Learning	We model and view learning as a continuous process, preparing students for higher education and service in their communities, families, and churches.
Excellence	We pursue excellence in all aspects of Christian education - academics, athletics, and the arts - to the glory of God.
Global	We embrace diverse cultural backgrounds, perspectives, and God-given gifts of students from around the world.
Student Focused	We recognize that each student is a unique child of God, and we are committed to serving their individual needs as we support their growth spiritually, academically, physically, socially, and emotionally.

ADMINISTRATION AND STAFF

The SCLA team is dedicated to valuing each student, guiding their education, supporting their work, meeting their needs, and celebrating their successes.

Administration

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

Activities

Phil Bunkowske, Director
Austin Eisenmann, MS Director
Lori Unke, Activities
Administrative Assistant

Admissions

Anna Biedenbender,
Domestic Counselor
Hannah Pankratz, Assistant
Hannah Schmiede, Director of
International Admissions and
Programs
Christine Wolfrath,
International Assistant
Kristin Lehmann,
International Counselor

Building and Grounds

Curt Richter, Director
Steve Frenz, Maintenance
Nancy Hartssock, Maintenance
Aaron Odegard, Maintenance
Jim Julian, Maintenance
Curt Montgomery, Maintenance
Josh Stehr, Maintenance
Allen Wright, Maintenance

Communications

Kristina Lewerenz, Director
Lisa Streckert, Assistant

Dormitory

Garrett Schoch, Director
Tamara Julian, Student Advisor

Finance

Kris Marshall, Business Manager
Rachel Collins, Finance Manager
Mark Tjelta, Data Analyst

Food Service

Pioneer Food Services

Guidance

Drew Kock, Director
Chris Maki, Counselor
Rev. Dustin Sievert, Ministry
Amanda Tess, Assistant / Records
Tammy Sloane-Kloss, Attendance

Mission Advancement

Carmen Tomfohrde
Dennis Palmberg

Nurse

Joey Nilan, ISD 197

Office Support

Amanda Tess,
Assistant to the Principal
Lisa Streckert,
MS Administrative Assistant
Naomi Johnston, Receptionist

Registrar

Amanda Tess, International
Dave Tess, Information Specialist

Technology

Brad Holum, IT Specialist

TEACHING FACULTY

Dates in parentheses indicate start year at SCLA.



Austin Eisenmann (2021)
B.S. Education with Math Minor
Classes: PreAlgebra, Algebra 1
Responsibilities: Middle School Athletic Director



Brad Essig (2021)
B.S. Education; M.A., Educational Leadership
Responsibilities: Principal



Hannah Frick (2023)
B.S. Education
Classes: History, World Cultures



Andrew Kramer (2025)
B. S. Education in Vocal and Instrumental Music
Classes: Middle School Band



Ryan Maertz (2022)
B.S., Education, Life Science and Chemistry
Classes: Middle School Science/STEM, P.E.
Responsibilities: Cross Country/Track Coach



Emily Mantz (2024)
B.S. Elementary Education; B.S. Communication Arts
and Literature Education
Classes: World Literature & Intermediate Grammar



April Marquardt (2017)
B.A. Elementary Education
Classes: MS ESL, MS Spanish, Yearbook, Newspaper
Responsibilities: Speech Coach, Piano and Voice Lessons



Mike Marquardt (2017)
B.S. Elementary Education; M.C.M. Choral
Classes: Choir



Anna Miller (2021)
B.A. Art; M.F.A. Visual Art with emphasis in Painting and Drawing
Classes: Art
Responsibilities: Domestic Admissions Counselor



Abby Plocher (2021)
B.S. Education, Communication Arts and Literature
Classes: Language Arts
Responsibilities: Cross Country/Track Coach

TEACHING FACULTY

Dates in parentheses indicate start year at SCLA.



Dr. Ryan Rathje (2017)

B.S. Education; M.Ed. Professional Development; Ed.D. in Curriculum,
Instruction, and Assessment

Classes: Geometry

Responsibilities: Academic Dean



Garrett Schoch (2022)

B.S. Education, Secondary Mathematics, Elementary

Classes: Geometry

Responsibilities: Dormitory Director



Samantha Schoch (2024)

B.S., Secondary Physical Education

Classes: P.E.

Responsibilities: Dormitory Supervisor



Pastor Dustin Sievert (2016)

B.A.; M.Div.

Classes: Religion

Responsibilities: Director of Ministry Recruitment,
Boys Basketball Coach



Dave Tess (2015)

B.S. Education; M.A. Educational Policy, Leadership;
M.S. Computer Science

Classes: Woodshop, Computer Science

Responsibilities: Information Specialist, Robotics Coach



Amanda Weddle (2023)

B.S. Education;

M.A., Special Education in ABS (Academic Behavior Strategist)

Classes: Language Arts, Math 1 & 2

Responsibilities: MS Learning Resource Center



Abby Zuberbier (2024)

B.S. Education

Classes: Learning Resource Center/ Study Hall

Responsibilities: Learning Resource Center Coordinator

NONDISCRIMINATION POLICY

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

TWO SEMESTER SYSTEM

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

GRADING

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

COURSES

U.S. History

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

World Cultures & Geography

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

World History

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

Science 1:

Diversity of Life, Chemical Interactions, Planetary Science

In Life Science, the structures and functions of living organisms are explored. The study progresses from organisms, their behaviors, cells, and adaptive structures and strategies. By exploring matter in Chemistry, students conduct experiments to observe phase change, dissolution, and reaction. This course helps students construct a solid basic understanding of the composition of their world and the energy interactions that maintain and transform the world. In Planetary Science, students study the Earth as a celestial object, the Moon, and other bodies in the solar system. Students explore the celestial motions, Moon phases, lunar geology, cratering processes, imaging technologies, scaling, and space exploration.
One semester

Medical Detectives

This STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) course introduces students to the nervous system, vital signs, and more while applying science and technology to diagnose fictional patients. Students explore how the human body works, investigate disease outbreaks, analyze medical data, and solve medical mysteries through experiments and lab activities.
One semester

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

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

One semester

Automation & Robotics

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

One semester

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

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

One semester

Green Architecture

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

One semester

Math 1

This course focuses on problem-based learning, incorporating interactive lessons and personalized practice. It aims to build a strong foundation in math concepts, procedural fluency, and real-world application. Topics include area and surface area, ratios, unit rates and percentages, dividing fractions, decimals, expressions and equations, positive and negative numbers, and data analysis.

Prerequisite: None

Two Semesters

Math 2

This course prepares students for Pre-Algebra through problem-based learning, interactive lessons, and personalized practice. Topics include scale drawings, proportional relationships, circles, proportional relationships and percentages, operations with integers, expressions, equations, and inequalities, geometry, and probability.

Prerequisite: None

Pre-Algebra

Prepares students for Algebra 1 and reinforces fundamental math skills.

Students learn to use variables in formulas, solve equations, solve problems and interpret data. Topics include rigid transformations and congruence, dilations, similarity, slope, proportional and linear relationships, linear equations and systems, functions and volume, associations in data, exponents and scientific notation, the pythagorean theorem, and irrational numbers.

Prerequisite: None

Algebra I

Explores the patterns within God's creation using mathematical models and reasoning. Students investigate change by comparing linear, quadratic, and exponential growth models. Topics include: patterns and sequences, linear equations and inequalities, describing data, describing functions, systems of linear equations and inequalities, exponential functions, quadratic functions, and quadratic equations.

Prerequisite: Pre-Algebra or department approval

Geometry (High school level class)

Explores the beauty and logic within God's creation by applying known axioms, theorems, and logical rules to geometric situations. Topics include: constructions and rigid transformations, congruence, similarity, right triangle trigonometry, coordinate geometry, circles, solid geometry, and conditional probability.

Prerequisite: Algebra 1 or Department Approval

Honors Geometry (High school level class)

Covers the same content as regular Geometry but does so at a quicker pace.

This allows more time to explore additional topics in mathematics that serve as a foundation for higher level mathematics. The course is geared towards students that are interested in pursuing degrees in STEM fields.

Prerequisite: Algebra 1 or Department Approval

Developmental Reading

This literacy intervention course reinforces fundamental reading skills.

Emphasis is on sentence writing proficiency, reading comprehension, and fluency. Students will grow in confidence as they are accelerated toward grade-level proficiency. This course is typically taken concurrently with a student's grade-level language arts course.

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

Language Arts 1

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

Language Arts 2

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

Language Arts 3

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

World Literature and Intermediate Grammar (High school level class)

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

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

ESL/ Language Arts

The purpose of this course is to provide international students, whose primary language is not English, with support in reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills, along with grammar, vocabulary, and spelling. Students will engage with various literary genres, practice writing for different purposes, and develop their ability to communicate effectively. The course aims to improve both written and verbal communication, critical thinking, and overall language proficiency.

Two semesters

Middle School Spanish

Students are introduced to Spanish language and culture using the four key areas of world language study: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Each unit consists of a new vocabulary theme and grammar concept, reading/listening comprehension activities, speaking and writing activities, cultural presentations, and activities and practice to reinforce vocabulary and grammar. The instructor will use a combination of Spanish and English while teaching.

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

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

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

Art

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

Woodshop

In this hands-on course, students will explore the fundamentals of wood-working through practical projects and skill-building activities. Students will learn how to safely use a variety of hand and power tools while developing essential skills such as accurate measuring, cutting, assembling, sanding, and finishing wood. Emphasis will be placed on craftsmanship, safety, and problem-solving as students bring their creative ideas to life through individual and group projects. This class provides a strong foundation for future work in trades, design, or construction, while encouraging confidence and pride in working with their hands.

Choir

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

Band

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

Physical Education

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

LEARNING PROGRAMS

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

Throughout the school year, students participate in experiential learning opportunities, including an overnight trip, as well as local day trips. The goal of these activities is for students to see that learning and service take place beyond the classroom walls.

Trips have included:

- TopGolf
- Allianz Field
- Feed My Starving Children
- Guthrie Theater

LEARNING RESOURCE PROGRAM

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

COURSE SAMPLE

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

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

Grade 6 Courses

World Cultures
Science and STEM
Math 1 or 2*
Language Arts 1 or 2*
Bible A, B, or C
Physical Education
Fine Arts Elective
Rotation: Spanish, Woodshop, Art

Grade 7 Courses

U.S. History
Science and STEM
Math 1 or 2, Algebra 1*
Language Arts 2 or 3*
Bible A, B, or C
Physical Education
Fine Arts Elective
Rotation: Spanish, Woodshop, Art

Grade 8 Courses

World History
Science and STEM
Math 2, Algebra 1, Algebra 2
Language Arts 2 or 3, World Lit. and Intermediate Grammar*
Bible A, B, or C
Physical Education
Fine Arts Elective
Rotation: Spanish, Woodshop, Art

CO-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Athletics

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

Fine Arts

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

Clubs

- Speech
- Math
- Robotics
- Newspaper
- International Mentors

QUALITY CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

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

To schedule a personal visit, contact:

Anna Miller, Domestic Admissions Counselor
AMiller@StCroixLutheran.org
651-455-1521 x1171

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



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