

ST PAUL'S

SCHOOL FOR BOYS

MIDDLE SCHOOL CURRICULUM GUIDE

2026–2027

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THE MISSION OF ST. PAUL'S SCHOOL FOR BOYS

Seek Truth, Knowledge, and Excellence. Live by Faith, Compassion, and Integrity.

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The student who graduates from St. Paul's is a critical thinker who is also inquisitive, creative, and open-minded. He takes initiative and he takes responsibility in scholarship and in sport, but more importantly he takes initiative in spirit; he lives a life of balance that is always counterweighed by principles and integrity.

OVERVIEW

St. Paul's School for Boys middle school uses an experiential, inquiry-based, and holistic educational approach that is tailored to the unique needs of adolescent boys.

Our goal is for each student to develop the skills and habits of mind that lead to mastery of essential knowledge and to becoming lifelong learners. St. Paul's students learn to live by integrity in a safe and inclusive community.

Middle school faculty have dedicated their careers to this age group, and the close bonds between teachers and students are central to the SP experience. The mentor-advisor program helps forge those deep connections and instills what it means to be a St. Paul's gentleman.

Trained in project-based learning and experiential education, our teachers help students develop curiosity, autonomy, and creative thinking. Acknowledging that the learning process contains setbacks as well as successes, our middle school is the perfect place to develop a growth mindset while being supported by a nurturing faculty whose goal is progress over perfection.

In dozens of opportunities, from arts programs and athletics to multiple global travel options and Lego robotics, St. Paul's students build lasting relationships with their teachers and friends and develop appreciation for the natural gifts in themselves and others.

THE ARTS

The Arts program in the middle school is designed to challenge and captivate students through a comprehensive range of curricular and extracurricular offerings. Students in grades five through seven study visual art, (including painting, drawing, ceramics, and additional 2D and 3D forms), Theatre, music, and woodworking, while eighth grade students have the opportunity for advanced study in two of these four disciplines. On any given day, for example, you may find students rehearsing the middle school production, crafting a wooden sculpture in the Woodworking shop, learning stage combat in one of our two black box theaters or the Ward Center Theater, attending a choral festival off campus, presenting at an arts exhibit at a local museum, or working with guest artists from the greater Baltimore community.

VISUAL ART

The middle school visual art classes encourage students to explore and experience art through various media by creating opportunities for all students to engage in creative problem solving, take risks, be curious, make mistakes, and learn and grow through the process of making art. Play and experimentation with media, techniques, and ideas are highlighted as important parts of the art making process. All students are encouraged and supported to challenge themselves, develop their confidence, understand and appreciate the process of making art. The practices and environment in each class will help students become open to multiple perspectives, ideas, and ways of creating and looking at art.

Students engage in art making that allows them to connect individually and meaningfully to broad themes that reflect humanity. Students learn about art and art history through the lens of these broad themes, which encourages all students to make personal and individual connections to the artwork that they create. Students are involved in consistent conversations about how to practice good craftsmanship and the importance of paying careful attention to the overall visual qualities of their artwork. In-process peer and group critiques and self-reflection are practiced in a variety of ways as important parts of the art making process. Individual growth is assessed using a standards-based feedback rubric that helps students understand their strengths and areas of potential growth.

Fifth Grade

Fifth grade visual art is exploratory in nature. Through a variety of art making experiences and by utilizing both 2-dimensional and 3-dimensional art media, students begin to practice and develop their understanding of how to create artwork. Students are introduced to the idea of art making as a process by experimenting with a variety of art media and by brainstorming, talking about, planning, and drafting their ideas before creating. Students begin to understand that art can be created for both individual and public purposes.

Sixth Grade

Sixth grade visual art reinforces and builds on the concepts, ideas, and techniques taught previously, and students are introduced to new materials and ways of working on their artwork. Specifically, students create at least one piece of artwork by collaborating with a peer or the entire class. Students are introduced to in-process critiques to practice talking about art and becoming more self-reflective.

Seventh Grade

Seventh grade visual art introduces more advanced techniques and art making skills to encourage individual exploration, skill development, and growth. Students explore and practice creating artwork from direct observation and continue developing their understanding of how to use symbolism and abstraction in their artwork to communicate ideas. The processes of planning, drafting, and brainstorming are reinforced, and new approaches are also introduced. Students are encouraged to rework, reconsider, and move beyond their initial ideas and plans for their artwork as a successful way to solve a visual problem. Students learn how to craft and write an Artist Statement to accompany at least one artwork.

Eighth Grade

Eighth grade visual art is the culmination of incorporating all previously learned concepts and skills through more advanced techniques and processes. Personal discovery, expression, and individual meaning-making plays a fundamental role in the creation of student artwork. In-process peer and group critiques are an important part of each unit of study. Students are introduced to using and working in a process journal to develop their ideas further, practice new techniques, and explore and continue developing their individual aesthetic and style. Students craft Artist Statements for at least two pieces of artwork.

WOODWORKING

Woodworking classes are designed to introduce students to wood as a natural resource, as a building material, and as a medium for artistic expression. An awareness of environmental concerns, plant biology, math, engineering, historical context, sequencing, problem solving, design, and conceptual creativity are all introduced as necessary components for successful work. In particular, the projects students undertake emphasize the "how to" aspects of working with wood as well as the creative opportunities such projects offer. There is also an emphasis on respect for tools and their safe and appropriate use. Regular exhibitions of student work on campus, as well as the welcoming of guest artists into our courses, are a capstone of our program.

Fifth Grade

Fifth grade Woodworking is designed as an introduction to wood, hand tools, and craftsmanship. The projects incorporate very basic joinery and serve as a foundation for future work.

Sixth Grade

Sixth grade Woodworking is designed to reinforce the lessons taught in the 5th grade, but challenges students further through the scope of the projects given. New tools are also introduced, including some basic power machinery.

Seventh Grade

The primary focus of the 7th grade woodworking class is Design Process. For each project, students will be challenged to research design possibilities, present a variety of ideas in the form of drawings and/or mock-ups, focus on a single idea, and flush-out the technical details before they begin building. This process, while critical to success in project building, can be applied in more general terms to all forms of creative challenges, in academics and beyond.

After a review of the general shop safety rules and safety rules specific to the lathe, drill press, band saw, and other power machines, we will start right into the first project. This will be a relatively quick assignment, intended to help returning students review and refresh their previous wood experience and to help new students become accustomed to the tools and materials. Our second project will be the major project for the semester. This is where our focus on Design Process will guide students through all the steps necessary to find success on a project that will be both technically and conceptually challenging. The third project will offer students a chance to work with fresh-cut lumber, which while it can be wonderful to turn and carve, presents its own challenges as it dries. Students will have some choice here as to the nature and scope of this project.

In addition to design, reflection, and the numerous woodworking processes taught, attention will also be paid to the biologic nature of wood as an organic material and its critical importance as an environmental resource.

Eighth Grade

This course will begin with an extensive introduction and review of shop safety rules, followed by an introduction of tools and techniques not covered in the lower grades. Students are required to complete a minimum of two projects. These are designed to challenge students both technically and creatively. The first assignment will focus primarily on methods of joinery and quality craftsmanship. The second assignment will challenge students to work intuitively through techniques of shaping, carving, and texturing. There will also be an extensive focus on turning on the lathe.

MUSIC

The choral music tradition at St. Paul's School is the primary focus of our comprehensive middle school Music program. Students are also exposed to instrumental performance, as well as music theory, sight-singing, and improvisation in a variety of musical genres. An extra-curricular ensemble, the Honors Choir, is an auditioned group of boys from seventh and eighth grade who maintain a highly active performance schedule in various venues throughout the region and at an adjudicated festival each year.

Music students receive instruction in vocal technique, music theory, stage deportment, and musical interpretation as they engage in the preparation of a concert performance as a choral ensemble at the end of each semester. They will encounter numerous elements of music theory (dynamics, musical expression, tempo, time signature, etc.) and will encounter Kodály-based sight-reading examples. Students will perform repertoire from a variety of genres, cultures, and time periods.

THEATRE

Theatre classes give our students the opportunity to experience leadership and teamwork in a different way than they might in the academic classroom or on the athletic fields. There are many exercises and improvisations designed to encourage the boys to work together efficiently, think creatively, and explore the concept of empathy to better understand the world around them and discover the range and depth of possibilities that are inherent in the Theatre arts. Students have the unique extra-curricular opportunity to audition for our middle school Musical, produced in collaboration with SPSG.

Fifth Grade

In Theatre 5, there is a strong emphasis placed on "ensemble" and the ability to collaboratively build earnest and meaningful universes on stage. Through a wide array of acting techniques, improvisation, and scene work assignments, students begin to understand the principles and functions of stage performance, playwriting, and overall storytelling.

Sixth Grade

Theatre 6 reinforces the various concepts covered in Theatre 5 but with a wider scope of repertoire that includes Period Acting as well as introductions into the various disciplines of musical theatre. The course culminates in a live evening performance of scenes and demonstrations.

Seventh Grade

In the semester length course of Theatre 7, students will both explore and interconnect the various disciplines within the art form more thoroughly. These disciplines include but are not limited to acting, playwriting, directing, stage management, lighting design, Theatre history, and Musical Theatre (performance, choreography, composition, and lyric writing). Lastly, students will synthesize these disciplines further through the culminating performance of a one-act play.

Eighth Grade

In Theatre 8, students will further explore and employ the philosophies and practices of various great theatre coaches such as Stanislavski, Spolin, Meisner, and Hagen to authentically create more realized universes of characters and story. The course will culminate in the performance of multiple play performances uniquely tailored to the enriching of every individual student within the class.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

The St. Paul's School for Boys middle school English Language Arts faculty believe that fostering a joyful relationship with reading and writing begins with student choice and voice. When students can connect to their reading material, they are more likely to find books and other media that deepen their love for reading and understanding the world around them. The English Language Arts texts have been chosen as mirrors where students see themselves, windows where students act as observers and sliding glass doors where students are transported to other places, experiences, and worlds. At each grade level, students are empowered to take accountability over their writing process, build crucial reading and annotating skills, and deepen their communication skills through feedback, speeches, debate, and discussion.

Additionally, students will build writing stamina through daily Quick Writes, journals, and Timed Writing activities that foster reflection, analysis, connection, and quick thinking.

Our department aspires to build an appreciation for reading and writing that fosters student imagination, communication, perspective, and connection. Students realize that reading can broaden their horizons, cultivate empathy and compassion, and enrich their lives.

Fifth Grade

In the fifth grade, English Language Arts and History are combined to form a study of Humanities. This approach allows students to explore the world, and their place in it, through intentionally chosen texts including *A Long Walk to Water* by Linda Sue Park, *Esperanza Rising* by Pam Muñoz Ryan, *Inside Out and Back Again* by Thanhha Lai, and *Number the Stars* by Lois Lowery, digital media, discussion, and individual reflection. Students develop their questioning, analyzing, problem-solving, and collaboration skills by reading literature that highlights the civilizations they are studying: Africa, the Americas, Asia, and the Near East. They will learn how to conduct research and seek original solutions for real-world problems explored in their novels and researched in the real world, both past and present.

Students will practice grammar and writing mechanics through assignments including essays, presentations, book reviews, and journaling. Students will begin to develop the skills necessary to express their thoughts clearly and concisely about what they are reading, their personal experiences, and their personal and academic connections to literature. Teacher feedback helps them enhance their communication and writing skills to prepare them for future grades.

Sixth Grade

Sixth graders develop their voice through a writing workshop approach that engages students in reading and writing while developing essential skills they will use throughout their lives. They will learn by imitating high-interest pieces of writing across genres, analyzing their mechanics, intent, and quality through peer and teacher feedback. Each student is challenged to refine their writing through the entire writing process until they produce their own anthology and even become published authors through our non-fiction essay writing "Now I Know" unit. The course focuses on using appropriate writing mechanics (spelling, grammar, punctuation) and understanding the structure of written pieces.

The course emphasizes problem-solving through literacy tools, fostering community, and encouraging students to connect to the world around them. Students explore a diverse array of perspectives while strengthening their own identity through novels like *Seedfolks* by Paul Fleishman, *The Do More Club* by Dana Kramaroff, and *When You Trap A Tiger* by Tae Keller.

Seventh Grade

Seventh Grade English uses literature to explore one enduring question: What kind of person do I want to become? Through stories of identity, courage, justice, leadership, and resilience, students will develop as analytical readers, thoughtful writers, empathetic citizens, and reflective young men who recognize that the choices they make today shape the lives they lead tomorrow.

Students express creativity and demonstrate research and analytical skills through short stories, journaling, and exploring their cultural identity. Whole-class texts including *Refugee* by Alan Gratz, *Lord of the Flies* by William Golding, *The Giver* by Lois Lowry, and selected short stories, promote academic development, global awareness, and challenge students to think about the ways that they can change their community and the world.

Throughout the school year, students engage in various writing forms, including short-form text analysis, essays, and speeches, which serve as tools for communication, entertainment, and personal expression. "Article-of-the-Week" assignments develop persuasive writing skills. Students read assigned articles, annotate them using our division-wide annotation model, and provide summative and narrative responses to the content. These carefully chosen articles foster discussion and debate skills that build a respectful and safe environment.

Eighth Grade

In eighth grade students explore personal narratives in all aspects of the course: reading, writing, and discussing. As the first rule of writing is to "write what you know," students explore the world around them through the voices of characters their age in fiction and nonfiction texts including *Between Two Brothers* by Crystal Allen, *Night by Ellie Wiesel*, *A for Effort* by Jarad Greene, and several short stories, all of which highlight themes of family, faith community, perseverance, and growing up. These texts are analyzed through the skill of Harkness: a discussion-based model that inspires student-led learning that fosters a deeper understanding of texts and how they connect to the reader, other texts, and the world around them. Harkness is a widely

practiced model that helps students develop meaningful critical analysis skills that will serve them throughout their educational career, and beyond.

Using their texts as exemplars, students will author four personal narrative essays during their eighth grade study that require reflection and expression of their own experiences, preparing them for their Eighth Grade Capstone: Crusader Con. Crusader Con, a joint writing and research project between English and History, asks students to explore their deepest held values and beliefs, and use them as a lens through which to view themselves, their community at St. Paul's, the world community, and history. Here they tie together everything they have learned during their Humanities career in our middle school and put it into action to inspire the 5–7th graders to explore, trust, and stand strong in themselves.

SOCIAL STUDIES

SOCIAL STUDIES

Fifth Grade Humanities

In fifth grade, English Language Arts and History combine for a study of Humanities, in which boys learn how reading, writing, and history work together. In this block, boys have more time to learn about their place in the world through text, digital tools, discussion, and individual reflection. Students will develop their questioning, analyzing, problem-solving, and collaborating skills by reading rich literature by diverse authors and examining how people move around the world.

In English Language Arts, boys will practice grammar and the mechanics of writing through various tasks, which include essays, presentations, book reviews, and journaling. Writing offers the students opportunities to share what they enjoy about reading, their personal experiences, and their connection to literature, while teacher feedback offers them avenues to improve their communication skills.

In History, boys will conduct research and find original solutions for problems that persist in our world. Students will conduct deep dives into various countries in Africa, the Americas, Asia, and the Near East in order to practice making observations, noticing patterns, and developing claims. At the same time, they read contemporary novels, which include *A Long Walk to Water*, *Esperanza Rising*, and *A Single Shard*.

Sixth Grade

The sixth grade World Cultures & Geography course introduces students to general aspects of physical and cultural geography by examining the interplay between physical and human characteristics. Students examine how geography in different regions of the world affects and influences various cultures. This course is designed to expose students to various elements of culture, such as religion, food, clothing, traditions, storytelling, and music. Additionally, students study the geography of the United States and Maryland, with an emphasis placed on understanding our place in the world. Students are assessed through a variety of innovative projects, such as the development of a class cookbook and a road trip through Maryland.

Students will continue their progression of historical skills by locating reliable evidence via research, developing sound thesis statements, engaging in civil discussions, understanding how to read and utilize maps, and constructing historical questions of their own.

Seventh Grade

The seventh-grade history course continues the progression of historical skills begun in previous years. By the end of the year, students will be able to examine and evaluate primary and secondary sources; answer historical questions using thesis statements supported by specific historical evidence; create and explore independent historical questions; and determine cause(s) and effect(s) of important events in U.S. history. Students will develop these historical skills as they explore topics from U.S. history, ranging from the first interactions of Europeans in the Western Hemisphere in 1492 and early settlement of the Americas through the outbreak of the U.S. Civil War. Students will demonstrate their progression and mastery of these skills through a variety of research assignments and writing-based assessments. In addition, the seventh grade U.S. history course includes a deliberate emphasis on social-emotional learning, as well as questions about citizenship and a comprehensive focus on human rights. This course and curriculum seek to foster the growth of important historical skills, the development of students' personal opinions and ideas, and an organized and intentional focus on writing. Ultimately, we hope to engage students to better recognize their place in modern America so that they end the year as more curious and empathetic members of our society.

Eighth Grade

The eighth-grade history course examines the United States from the aftermath of the U.S. Civil War to present day. A continued focus on the historical skills fostered in grades five-seven, including a keen level of attention to primary and secondary sources, furthering writing skills, and confidently interacting with essential questions, ensures each student finds meaning in the eighth-grade course and is prepared to successfully transition into the ninth grade. This course is designed to engage students to

understand the United States in a global context so that they are prepared to develop and defend their own opinions on a range of topics.

Students will demonstrate their progression and mastery of analytical and research skills through a variety of projects and writing-based assessments. In addition, the eighth grade U.S. history course includes a deliberate emphasis on social-emotional learning, as well as a comprehensive analysis of the ever-changing nature of citizenship in the United States. Concepts such as morality, prejudice, human rights, and social justice are guiding pillars in our curriculum and are consistently explored by students, including through interdisciplinary projects and activities with the English department.

We aim to infuse our students with the confidence to engage with the events of the modern U.S. and its place in the world because of a well-rounded history course that contextualizes the experiences of all peoples and stories from all corners of this country, ultimately leading to a stronger sense of empathy and awareness among our students.

MATHEMATICS

MATHEMATICS

Fifth Grade

In **Math 5**, students will develop a solid foundation in elementary school math by mastering key topics such as:

- Whole numbers
- Decimals
- Simple fractions
- Equivalencies
- Simplifying expressions
- Number sense
- Geometry

Additionally, students will be encouraged to develop a strong mathematical vocabulary to effectively communicate their ideas and solutions.

Special focus will be given to understanding mechanics and relationships of the four operations as well as the impact of order of operations. The exploration of patterns will be an integral part of the learning process, stimulating critical thinking and problem-solving abilities. Practical applications of math in the real world will be consistently integrated into each unit, making the learning experience engaging and relevant.

Communication through discussion and written work will be practiced. As students' progress, they will be introduced to basic Algebra skills, providing a foundation for more advanced mathematical concepts in the future. Overall, the 5th-grade math class aims to instill confidence and competence in mathematics while nurturing a love for learning and problem-solving.

In **Accelerated Math 5**, students will develop a solid foundation in elementary school math by mastering key topics such as:

- Whole numbers
- Decimals
- Simple fractions
- Equivalencies
- Simplifying expressions
- Number sense
- Geometry

Additionally, students will be encouraged to develop a strong mathematical vocabulary to effectively communicate their ideas and solutions.

Special focus will be given to understanding mechanics and relationships of the four operations as well as the impact of order of operations. The exploration of patterns will be an integral part of the learning process, stimulating critical thinking and problem-solving abilities. Practical applications of math in the real world will be consistently integrated into each unit, making the learning experience engaging and relevant.

Communication through discussion and written work will be practiced. As students' progress, they will be introduced to Algebra skills, providing a foundation for more advanced mathematical concepts in the future.

The curriculum of this Accelerated class is structured for a swifter progression, requiring students to rapidly comprehend, retain, and apply skills. This will allow for the class to advance to the next concept with fewer practice problems.

Sixth Grade

In **Math 6**, students will explore math interconnections using manipulatives, analysis, and practice. They will study:

- Integers
- Decimals
- Fractions
- demonstrate their knowledge through discussion and written work

The class will strengthen mathematical understanding through number theory concepts like:

- Prime factorization
- Divisibility rules
- Greatest common factor
- Least common multiple
- Exponents
- Proportions

These principles are essential building blocks of math knowledge.

Students will continue to investigate the relationships between decimals, fractions, and percentages through real-life applications in word problems form. Problem-solving skills will be honed through simple and complex word problems and basic algebraic scenarios.

Each unit will be explored in-depth, providing plenty of opportunities for students to tackle challenging problems and enhance their mathematical abilities. The 6th grade math class aims to instill confidence and competence in mathematics while nurturing a love for learning and problem-solving.

In **Accelerated Math 6**, students will explore math interconnections using manipulatives, analysis, and practice. They will study:

- Integers
- Decimals
- Fractions
- Demonstrate their knowledge through discussion and written work

The class will strengthen mathematical understanding through number theory concepts like:

- Prime factorization
- Divisibility rules
- Greatest common factor
- Least common multiple
- Exponents
- Proportions

These principles are essential building blocks of math knowledge.

Students will continue to investigate the relationships between decimals, fractions, and percentages through real-life applications in word problems form. Problem-solving skills will be honed through simple and complex word problems and basic algebraic scenarios.

Each unit will be explored in-depth, providing plenty of opportunities for students to tackle challenging problems and enhance their mathematical abilities. The curriculum of this Accelerated class is structured for a swifter progression, requiring students to rapidly comprehend, retain, and apply skills. This will allow for the class to advance to the next concept with fewer practice problems.

Seventh Grade

Pre-Algebra begins with a significant focus on integers and order of operations, providing a solid footing for the journey ahead. Throughout the course, students will explore, apply, and communicate math vocabulary through discussion and written justification. A solid foundation to foster problem-solving abilities and critical thinking will be developed with:

- Properties
- Exponents
- Expressions
- Substitution
- Multistep equations

Students will also become proficient in manipulating rational numbers in all their forms and will gain insight into the equivalent relationships between decimals, fractions, percent, ratios, and proportions.

One- and two-dimensional Geometry will also be studied to lay the groundwork for geometric understanding. Visual thinking and inductive reasoning skills will be honed as they analyze various geometric figures. Two-Dimensional shapes will be studied, empowering students to confidently master calculations of perimeter and area. Throughout the academic year, our focus will be on building a layered understanding of foundational skills. As students' progress through this course, they will acquire a firm grasp of essential mathematical concepts including Algebraic variables, setting the stage for further learning and success in their mathematical journey.

Each unit will be explored in-depth, providing plenty of opportunities for students to tackle challenging problems and enhance their mathematical abilities. The 7th-grade math class aims to instill confidence and competence in mathematics while nurturing a love for learning and problem-solving.

Accelerated Pre-Algebra begins with an introduction to finite systems and mathematical properties, where students will explore and operate with different sets and newly introduced operations such as union and intersection. Number theory and number classification will be analyzed through discussion and written justification. A solid foundation to foster problem-solving abilities and critical thinking will be developed with:

- Properties
- Exponents
- Expressions
- Substitution
- Multistep and literal equations

Students will also become proficient in manipulating rational numbers in all their forms and will gain insight into the equivalent relationships between decimals, fractions, percent, ratios, and proportions.

One, two, and three-dimensional Geometry will be studied to lay the groundwork for geometric understanding. Visual thinking and inductive reasoning skills will be honed as they analyze various geometric figures. Shapes will be studied, empowering students to confidently master calculations of perimeter, area, and volume of complex figures.

Throughout the academic year, our focus will be on building a detailed layered understanding of skills and their relationships. As students' progress through this course, they will acquire a firm grasp of essential mathematical concepts and feel comfortable with Algebraic variables. Each unit will be explored in-depth, providing plenty of opportunities for students to tackle challenging problems and enhance their mathematical abilities. The curriculum of this Accelerated class is structured for a swifter progression, requiring students to rapidly comprehend, retain, and apply skills. This will allow for the class to advance to the next concept with fewer practice problems.

Eighth Grade

In the **Algebra 1** course, the primary focus is on learning the essential algebra skills including:

- Expressions
- Equations
- Inequalities
- Linear equations
- Systems of equations
- Polynomials
- Factoring
- Quadratic equations
- Rational expressions
- Irrationals

Students will investigate, discuss, and solve using their prior knowledge of number patterns and operational relationships. The graphing calculator will be introduced and used as a tool to assist with complex equations and graphs including parabolas and other plotted results.

Additionally, students will continue to explore and grow with different Geometry concepts from previous years and utilize Geometer Sketchpad tool to reinforce their understanding through visual and interactive learning.

Furthermore, the course places special emphasis on real-world problem-solving skills. Analyzing and understanding how to solve problems will be learned through math discussions, algebraic translation, number patterns, and written justification. Our goal is to provide a comprehensive and well-rounded Algebra 1 experience, empowering students with the necessary knowledge and abilities to excel in their mathematical journey and future academic pursuits.

The **Accelerated Algebra 1** course emphasizes mastering essential Algebra skills. The students investigate:

- Expressions
- Equations
- Inequalities
- Linear equations
- Systems of equations
- Polynomials
- Factoring
- Quadratic equations
- Rational expressions
- Irrationals
- Functions

Students will investigate, discuss, and solve using their prior knowledge of number patterns and operational relationships. The graphing calculator will be introduced and used as a tool to assist with complex equations and graphs including parabolas and other plotted results.

Additionally, students will continue to explore and grow with different Geometry concepts from previous years and utilize Geometer Sketchpad tool to reinforce their understanding through visual and interactive learning.

Finally, they work on real-world problem-solving skills in preparation for the Upper School. The Accelerated course works at a quick pace and ends the year investigating Algebra 2 topics.

SCIENCE

SCIENCE

Fifth Grade

This is the first year that science is introduced as a core subject and utilizes life science as the vehicle to introduce students to the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) and the skills necessary to find success throughout their time in middle school.

The students work on a variety of skills throughout the year including reading comprehension, note-taking, observations and inferences, and critical thinking and problem-solving skills. A strong emphasis is also placed on developing and honing the students' executive functioning skills so that they have the confidence to succeed in their scientific studies. The Chesapeake Bay serves as a focal point of the curriculum. By examining the environment, ecology, and evolution of the bay, the students gain a better understanding of the world around them. They will delve into the plant and animal kingdoms to explore a variety of subjects. Trees, flowers, arthropods, mollusks, fish, and birds are studied to help students begin to see how form and function are related. Hands-on activities and project-based learning are integral to the curriculum and serve to generate meaningful educational experiences for the students as they utilize the scientific method to explore the bay and its environment. Lastly, students will consider their own role in the surrounding environment and reflect on the impact that their decisions have on the world around them in preparation for their continued journey next year when they study the earth's systems.

Sixth Grade

Science students in the sixth-grade endeavor to continue utilizing the scientific method to explore and model the fundamental principles of the Earth's land, atmosphere, space, and oceans. Most importantly, they continue to utilize the NGSS skills framework and continue building a solid foundation of success in science. Using the lens of "Earth-Environment-Evolution" students will explore the following topics: climate, weather, natural disasters, oceans, rivers, solar system, galaxies, constellations, the sun, the moon, rocks and minerals, plate tectonics, and natural resources. They will reinforce the essential skills of science through guided and open-ended investigations, as well as participate in numerous demonstrations and lab investigations. Lastly, students in sixth grade will learn how the interconnected relationships of earth systems help shape the environment. This framework of interconnected systems will be a foundation for how they approach the body systems in next year's anatomy and physiology class.

Seventh Grade

Seventh grade science concentrates on human body systems with an understanding that healthy decisions and habits can be responsible for a higher quality of life. As they continue to utilize the NGSS skills framework they will begin to explore the roles and functions of organs within the major systems of the body. Most importantly, in each system they study they will be challenged to learn how each system supports the others—continuing the theme of interconnectedness. Students will explore the following units: lab safety, the scientific method, microscopes, the generalized cell, the skeletal system, the circulatory system, the digestive system, and nutrition, the reproductive system, the nervous system and brain diseases & disorders, and genetics & heredity. Content from readings is reinforced with lab investigations and projects that promote the skills necessary to do and succeed in science. A very strong emphasis is placed on study and note-taking skills, and students have a variety of assessments along their unique journey. These habits and skills will be reviewed and reinforced next year as they tackle the abstract nature of physical science.

Eighth Grade

Students will explore and model the fundamental principles of chemistry, physics, and engineering. They will continue to utilize the NGSS skill framework and developing the skills and confidence for a successful culmination to their middle school science career. Topics covered include the foundations of chemical reactions, atomic theory, periodicity, classical physics, electricity, engineering design, iterative processes, and design thinking. Students will also learn about graphing dependent and independent variables and using those graphs to explain the patterns and trends they are observing in the laboratory. Students reinforce content from reading and lecture through guided and open-ended investigations, as well as participate in numerous demonstrations and lab exercises.

WORLD LANGUAGES AND CULTURES

The goal for each St. Paul's graduate is proficiency in the world language he chooses. At the Middle School level, this journey begins with comprehension of the new language. As with acquisition of native language, students will be able to understand more than they can produce. Speaking and writing begin to take root but as compared to a traditional language classroom, there is a greater emphasis on comprehension with increasing levels of difficulty. By the 8th grade, there is understanding of a more complex language structure, laying the foundation for Upper School courses and, ultimately, communicative proficiency.

We use guidelines from the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Language (ACTFL), regarding desired speaking and writing outcomes for each language level.

SPANISH

Fifth Grade

By the end of 5th grade, students will have familiarity with the language, exposure to target cultures, an interest developing their language skills, understanding of basic stories, and a positive personal experience associated with learning a new language.

Sixth Grade

By the end of 6th grade, students will be able to use several repetitive words and simple phrases to convey basic information about themselves. They can understand common actions, stories, and conversations.

Seventh Grade

By the end of 7th grade, students will be able to communicate with familiar words on several tasks, topics, and activities. They begin to combine words and phrases that reflect very simple, original sentences using a greater array of vocabulary and grammatical mastery acquired in class.

Eighth Grade

By the end of 8th grade, students will be able to communicate with a variety of words and phrases and elaborate with more detail. They will be able to combine simple sentences and express thoughts in original sentences. They continue to make speaking errors, but their errors do not interfere with overall communication.

JAPANESE

Fifth Grade

By the end of the 5th program, students will acquire proficiency in identifying, reading, and writing Hiragana and Katakana, the foundational alphabets of the Japanese language. They will also learn basic classroom expressions to effectively communicate with teachers in Japanese during class, enabling them to convey simple information about themselves. As a culmination of their progress, they will deliver a PowerPoint presentation titled "All about me" in Japanese at the end of the academic year.

Sixth Grade

Upon completion of the 6th-grade program, students will demonstrate skillful usage of both Hiragana and Katakana for reading and writing, and they will also be introduced to basic Kanji characters. They will be able to express themselves, describe their family members, and discuss their physical appearances. Additionally, they will participate in a group skit presentation as the final activity of the academic year.

Seventh Grade

As they progress through the 7th-grade program, students' sentence construction abilities will expand. They will learn to express their daily routines, and hobbies, and ask for directions using correct conjugations. Furthermore, they will engage in group projects that explore Japanese geography and culture, culminating in a presentation where they share their research findings with their classmates. To refine their writing skills, students will also maintain an exchange diary.

Eighth Grade

By the end of the 8th-grade program, students will reach a solid foundation at the beginner's level of Japanese Middle School proficiency. They will be able to effectively communicate orally and in writing by combining the vocabulary and phrases they have previously learned. While occasional speaking errors may still occur, they will not hinder overall communication. Students will exhibit detailed and original thought in their expressions. Moreover, they will have the ability to identify, read, and write over 100 combinations of Hiragana and Katakana, as well as approximately 80 or more Kanji characters. In January, they will have the opportunity to visit the Japanese New Year Festival in Washington D.C., conducting interviews in Japanese. As an enrichment program, they will also engage in e-video exchanges with Japanese middle school students learning English. The academic year will conclude with their "All About Me: advanced version" presentation, where they can reflect on their growth and accomplishments by comparing it to the original "All About Me: beginner's Version" presentation they created in 5th grade.

LEARNING LAB

In the Academic Skills Class, students work towards building long-term academic habits and routines by working daily to record, prioritize, plan, and complete assignments. The class aims to provide developmentally appropriate, direct instruction in goal setting, note taking, study skills and test-taking strategies, organization, time management, and self-advocacy. The school aims to maintain small class size and to coordinate closely with core academic subjects to support students and monitor progress across disciplines. The goal of the Academic Skills class is to promote student success and participation in a world language. Academic Skills Class may be offered in grades five through eight and is taught by a Learning Specialist or other experienced faculty. The Academic Skills Class may be offered in lieu of a World Language class. Middle School students who demonstrate a need and who have a diagnosed learning difference and comprehensive psych-ed evaluation will be considered. Participation is reevaluated to determine supports and course selection for the following year. Options for the following year include taking a world language or continuing in the Academic Skills class.

A Reading Class may be offered to our 5th and 6th grade students who are identified with reading challenges through an educational reading assessment. More comprehensive testing may be required to continue receiving support moving forward. The reading class may be offered in lieu of a world language class. The reading class aims to provide direct reading instruction in comprehension, active reading strategies, vocabulary, fluency, and written responses to text.

STEM

STEM

Sixth Grade

Sixth grade Introduction to Robotics is a quarter-long introduction to programming and robotics that aims to engage students and develop important problem-solving skills. Every student will take it throughout the school year. This class has a strong focus on project-based learning that fosters the responsible use of technology and the development of a strong foundation of the skills necessary to define a problem and iterate through to a solution. In 6th grade we will learn about drag and drop programming that is the foundation of the EV3 and Spike Prime robots utilized in the First Lego League annual challenges. In 7th grade we will begin by programming a very simple game in Python and then put these skills to the test as they attempt the annual First Lego League challenges, as well. At quarter's end, the boys will have acquired a framework to build upon as they continue to explore their programming and robotics passions in the Middle School and beyond.

Seventh Grade

Seventh grade's Introduction to Engineering and Design is a quarter-long introduction to the different skills necessary for today's engineers. Every student will take it throughout the school year. They will explore 3d modeling and CAD design, design thinking, and the various tools of the middle school makerspace. Projects they will complete over the quarter include model rockets, CO_2 dragsters, balsa wood bridges, glass etching, model trebuchets, and Rube Goldberg machines. We will be learning how to work from a design and iterate through each step of the process, testing designs virtually first to understand how modifying certain parameters and constraints can have large implications to the final product. Students will then build and compete against one another in various challenges tied to each project. At the end of the quarter students will have explored and utilized each of the tools in the makerspace so that they are familiar with how to use them safely and effectively as they transition to the Upper School STEM programs.

Eighth Grade

Eighth grade's Advanced Engineering is a semester-long elective course that continues to build upon the foundations created in their Seventh-Grade year. Students will continue the iterative design approach as they will now utilize all the tools of the makerspace to complete much larger capstone projects that couldn't be tackled in only a quarter. Students will engage in and complete multi-faceted projects that rely on multiple skills and tools to complete, such as large-scale carnival games, carpet ball tables, superhero 3D-printed self-portraits, and zig zag challenge tables. Students will also learn about project budgeting and planning as they undertake their chosen capstone project. At the end of the semester, they will "unveil" their project for the rising eighth graders so they can learn about what's possible in the Middle School STEM Lab.

SPIRITUAL AND FAITH STUDIES

SPIRITUAL AND FAITH STUDIES

Fifth Grade

The 5th grade Religious Studies class is a quarter-long class that introduces ways of marking time in different religious traditions. Through mini-projects, activities, experiential learning, readings, and guest speakers, students will gain a deeper understanding of and appreciation for various religious traditions and develop a greater sense of autonomy for their lives as they move through the challenging years of middle school.

Sixth Grade

The sixth-grade Religious Studies course, Exploring the Old Testament, introduces students to the structure and content of the bible with a focus on the Old Testament. They learn the books of the Hebrew scriptures and how to use the resources found in the bible. The course will then cover the stories of creation and other important events and figures such as Abraham and Moses. Students also spend some time learning about Israel as a monarchy, under both the united and divided kingdoms. They also touch on wisdom literature, especially the book of psalms.

Seventh Grade

The seventh-grade Introduction to New Testament course introduces students to the structure and content of the bible with a focus on the New Testament. Students have a brief recap of the Old Testament for the purposes of understanding its relationship to the New Testament. They also learn the various divisions of the New Testament and who is credited for writing the different books of the New Testament. There is a high-level overview on the life of Jesus, Paul, and the reason behind the writing of the Gospels, Epistles, and Apocalyptic text.

Eighth Grade

The eighth-grade Religious Studies: Faith & Morality class is designed to help students gain an understanding about the importance of morality, character, integrity, and compassion. As these virtues are taught, there will be an exploration of ways to model and exude these virtues as Middle School students at St. Paul's. The way in which we will grapple with better understanding the nature of these virtues will be by reading, analyzing, and discussing some of the teachings/parables of Jesus that were written in the Holy Bible. A portion of the course will briefly preview certain aspects about the world that will give more significance to social justice. Our hope is that our students will be able to take ownership of these virtues and find value in them as they matriculate onward at St. Paul's.

HEALTH AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION

The Physical Education curriculum is designed to provide students with the knowledge and skills needed to develop and maintain a healthy and active lifestyle. It covers a wide range of physical activities, from individual and team sports to lifelong games and activities. Students will be able to identify and explain essential health and nutrition principles and apply them to their daily lives to help create a well-rounded education!

The overall goal of the Physical Education curriculum is to use sports to develop physically literate individuals who exhibit responsible social and emotional behavior including respect for self and others. Students will be able to apply the concepts of social and emotional learning to develop an improved sense of self-management and awareness, decision making, relationship skills, and social awareness. Mastering these concepts in Physical Education will prepare students to be productive members of athletic teams at St. Paul's while giving them tools to be collaborative and effective team members in group settings outside of athletics.

HEALTH AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Fifth & Sixth Grades

- **Introduction to Physical Fitness and Wellness**
  - Understanding the components of physical fitness
  - Locker room/Hallway procedures
  - Class expectations
  - Warm-Up Routine
  - Identifying the benefits of regular physical activity
- **Mental, Social, Emotional, and Physical**
  - Understand basic nutrition concepts
  - Food Groups
  - Proper Hydration
- **Basic Movement Skills**
  - Developing gross motor skills through running, jumping, and throwing activities
  - Developing fine motor skills through coordination exercises
  - Identify and apply basic sports skills such as dribbling, passing, and catching
- **Team Sports**
  - Introduction to team sports such as basketball, soccer, baseball, and football.
  - Identify basic rules and regulations of each sport
  - Apply basic skills and strategies for each sport
- **Health and Safety Education**
  - Understanding the importance of maintaining good health and hygiene
  - Introduction to the dangers of drug and alcohol abuse
  - Basic first aid and injury prevention techniques

Seventh Grade

- **Personal Fitness**
  - Understanding the principles of personal fitness
  - Developing a personal fitness plan
  - Identify factors that affect physical fitness
  - Apply those factors to your life
- **Individual Sports**
  - Identify skills and concepts of individual sports such as golf and pickleball
  - Describe rules and regulations of each sport
  - Developing basic skills and strategies for each sport
- **Team Sports**
  - Continued development of team sports skills and strategies
  - Introduction to advanced tactics and strategies for team sports
- **Health and Safety Education**
  - Understanding the dangers of tobacco use and the effects of secondhand smoke
  - Understanding mental health and stress management strategies

Eighth Grade

- **Advanced Personal Fitness**
  - Developing advanced personal fitness plans
  - Identifying and overcome barriers to physical fitness
  - Introduction to strength training and conditioning
- **Lifetime Activities**
  - Introduction to activities that can be enjoyed throughout life such as weight training, hiking, golf, and pickleball.
  - Developing basic skills and techniques for each activity
- **Team Sports**
  - Continued development of team sports skills and strategies
  - Introduction to different roles and positions within team sports
- **Health and Safety Education**
  - Understanding the dangers of substance abuse and addiction