The Harvey School



2026-2027
Middle School Program of Study
Academic Overview & Course Description

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Academics at Harvey Middle School

Academic Year and Grades

The school year is divided into fall, winter and spring trimesters, each approximately 12 weeks long. Each trimester consists of two marking periods and advisors keep parents updated about academic progress during each term. Additionally, Curriculum Night and Parent/Teacher Conferences take place during both the fall and spring trimesters.

All middle school students sit for comprehensive exams in math and English at the end of the winter trimester.

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

There are five letter grades:
A (superior accomplishment) through D (a minimal understanding of the essentials), and F (no credit).

There are five effort-related grades:
4 (superior effort) through 0 (no discernible effort).

Honors

Academic achievement is recognized at the end of each marking period. Students who earn a 3.3 grade point average and have no grade lower than a B- (2.7 weighted) are named to the Honor Roll. Students who earn a 3.7 average with no grade lower than a B (3.0 weighted) are named to the Head's List.

Extra Help

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

Homework

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

Middle School at Harvey

Middle school represents a bridge from the intimate settings provided by elementary programs to the more rigorous of the high school years. Therefore, our Middle School seeks to provide a developmentally appropriate academic program that is both challenging and empowering for young adolescents. It offers an engaging learning environment that encourages students to reach their potential in a broad range of academic and extracurricular pursuits. Middle School faculty members develop skills in students that will help them succeed in high school and beyond.

Communication, Curiosity, Creativity, Critical Thinking, and **Collaboration** are all areas of focus.

Our teachers work diligently to understand the individual learning styles and natural strengths of their students so that they can bring out the best in each of them. Intellectual development takes place by presenting an integrated course of study that focuses on key content areas. Interdisciplinary work is an important aspect of the Middle School curriculum that allows learning to take place across multiple disciplines as students study relevant themes and topics.

Instruction and Assessment

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

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

A typical Middle School academic program includes the following:

Sixth Grade

English
Math 6
Science
History 6
Spanish or Latin
Theater & Fine Arts
Electives

Seventh Grade

English
Math 7
Science
History 7
Spanish or Latin
Theater & Fine Arts
Electives

Eighth Grade

English
Math 8
Algebra 1
Science
History 8
Spanish or Latin
Theater & Fine Arts
Electives

English

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

ENGLISH 6

Students study developmentally appropriate novels, short stories, nonfiction, fables, and poetry. Instruction and class discussions encourage students to examine ideas related to theme, plot, character, conflict, and setting. Grammar and vocabulary skills are taught using an integrated approach.

Throughout the year, students are introduced to strategies in the Six Traits of Writing, focusing on organization and conventions. Written responses encourage them to transfer their thoughts to paper and develop narrative, expository, descriptive, and persuasive writing styles. Students explore poetry through the creation of an Anthology that holds original and researched works. Literature selections may include *The Giver*, *Ghost*, and *Stargirl* and various short stories.

ENGLISH 7

This course further develops students' reading, writing, and communication skills. Students use resources such as Write Source and the Elements of Literature to support written responses to discussions and literature. In addition, the Six Traits of Writing supports the writing process, with increased emphasis on sentence fluency and word choice. Students explore poetry through the creation of an Anthology that holds original and researched works. Literary analysis and discussion accompany the reading of traditional and contemporary literature, including *The Outsiders*, *A Long Walk to Water*, and *The Wednesday Wars*.

ENGLISH 8

English 8 continues to develop and refine the reading, writing, and communication skills developed earlier in middle school. Higher-level thinking is supported through discussions and written responses to universal themes, plot development, character analysis, and critical reading for literary devices. Students explore short stories, dramatic writings, poetry, non-fiction, and traditional and contemporary novels. Literary selections include *The Revolution of Evelyn Serrano*, *Animal Farm*, *Home of the Brave*, and *The Pearl*.



History

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

HISTORY 6

Through the study of geography, students develop an understanding of early civilizations and world cultures. The course begins with a study of map skills, including political and physical maps, globes, latitude and longitude, and the five themes of geography. Students explore early humans and the Neolithic Revolution before examining the ancient civilizations of Mesopotamia and Egypt, focusing on geography, religion, government, trade, and major achievements. The course continues with the cultures and religions of ancient India and China, including Hinduism, Buddhism, and Confucianism, and concludes with a study of Ancient Greece and its lasting contributions in democracy, mythology, philosophy, and culture. Throughout the year, students participate in discussions, map activities, research projects, presentations, and writing assignments to strengthen historical understanding and critical thinking skills.

HISTORY 7

This course traces the growth and development of the United States from early cultures in the Americas through the Civil War. Students study European exploration, colonization, and the rise of the American colonies while examining how geography, government, economics, and belief systems shaped societies and influenced historical events. Significant time is devoted to the American Revolution, the leadership of the nation's early presidents, the creation of the United States government, westward expansion, slavery, and the Civil War. Students also study the foundations of the Constitution and the roles of the executive, legislative, and judicial branches. Throughout the year, students strengthen critical thinking, map-reading, writing, research, and presentation skills through class projects while connecting historical events to their impact on American society.

HISTORY 8

This eighth grade course focuses on the history of the United States from the post-Civil War era to the present day. After a brief review of early 19th-century topics like westward expansion and slavery, students dive into the Reconstruction era to examine how the nation's culture and economy grew and changed. The curriculum then moves into the 20th century, where we look at the key decisions made by the United States at home and abroad. This includes a study of the World Wars and the choices made by global leaders during those times. From there, eighth graders work through the decades from the 1950's to the present, looking at how different presidents and national policies have handled an ever-changing world. Special projects, such as our 1960's assignment and a Black History Month presentation, give students a chance to explore important social movements and historical figures in depth. Throughout the year, we focus on using primary and secondary sources to build critical thinking. Since being able to share ideas clearly is a big part of this class, students are expected to practice their skills through regular class discussions and historical writing.

Languages

All students entering grades 6-8 are required to take Spanish. The Middle School places students in the most appropriate language class, allowing them to be successful and to gain levels of excitement and enthusiasm toward learning and mastering the subject.

SPANISH 1

This Spanish 1 course is designed for students with either minimal or no language experience. It reinforces the four basic language skills of reading, writing, speaking, and listening and aims to improve students' appreciation of Spanish-speaking cultures. Students will learn common vocabulary terms and phrases using present tense structures. The students participate in simple conversations, and develop the confidence to move on to the next level of Spanish. Multiple resources, including digital and multimedia, are used to support student learning.

SPANISH 2

This class is designed for students with prior experience learning Spanish. It emphasizes more challenging vocabulary and phrases using present and past structures. The students engage daily in conversational Spanish. Continued emphasis is placed on appreciating Spanish-speaking cultures and understanding their growth in America and beyond.

SPANISH 3

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

LATIN

Latin is a middle school class designed to build on the grammar, vocabulary, and information designed to cover a range from introductory to fundamental levels of Latin. The course transitions from life in ancient Italy to the frontiers of Roman Britain and the cosmopolitan streets of ancient Alexandria. Grammatically, sentence structure and vocabulary is introduced. Students will learn verb tenses and complete translations.



Note: Two years of a foreign language beyond the Middle School level is a graduation requirement for the Upper School.

Harvey Upper School offers Latin, Spanish, and Japanese.

Mathematics

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

MATH 6

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



MATH 7

The Math 7 curriculum builds a strong foundation in proportional reasoning, algebra, geometry, and data concepts. Students learn to recognize and represent proportional relationships using tables, graphs, and equations, and apply rates and ratios to real-world situations. They develop fluency with integer operations and begin working with algebraic expressions, multi-step equations, and inequalities, including graphing solution sets. Geometry topics include angle relationships, the area and circumference of circles, and the surface area of rectangular prisms. The year also introduces scale drawings and basic probability, helping students understand samples, bias, and how data can represent a larger population.

MATH 8

The curriculum covers Rules of Exponent, Scientific Notation, and their applications, including solving word problems. It explores angle relationships from intersecting parallel lines, the sum of angles in a triangle, and properties of exterior angles. The focus is on solving equations with variables on both sides, graphing linear equations using graphing, elimination, and substitution, and applying these methods to real-world problems. Transformations on a coordinate plane are studied, including reflections, volume calculations for 3D shapes, properties of similar triangles, functions, domain and range, and analyzing scatter plots and two-way frequency tables.

Science

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

SCIENCE 6

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

SCIENCE 7

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

SCIENCE 8

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



Electives & Clubs

The Middle School electives and clubs program encourages students to explore their interests, express their creativity, and develop new skills beyond the core academic subjects. The Performing Arts, Fine Arts, and Electives program offers a dynamic range of courses designed to inspire imagination, promote collaboration, and provide hands-on learning experiences that go beyond the traditional classroom. Whether creating visual art, performing musically, or exploring the world of robotics, students will find exciting ways to grow both academically and artistically. These courses aim to enhance students' creativity and innovation while also inspiring them to build confidence and discover new areas of interest.

BAND

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

CHORUS

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

COMMUNICATION / PERFORMANCE

The course will teach and practice various aspects of communication. Students will learn important elements of verbal and nonverbal interactions in social situations, academic settings, and theatrical moments. Students will have the opportunity to script scenarios, role-play, and perform in fun, meaningful settings. Collaboration and creativity will be points of emphasis.



CURRENT EVENTS & DEBATE

Students will explore events in our ever-changing world. As they become familiar with relevant issues impacting our world, they will decide which issues to dive deeper into and debate with classmates. Periodically, students will conduct a mock debate on their chosen topic. Students will learn effective public speaking, debate techniques, and active listening skills.

DANCE

Dance meets in a professional studio space in The Walker Center for the Arts and provides students with the opportunity to explore various dance styles, learn techniques, and develop choreography skills. Some of the styles include jazz, hip-hop, modern, and contemporary. Body alignment, posture, and sequencing will be developed and there will be performance opportunities in the dance studio.

ELEMENTS OF DESIGN

This course provides students with an introduction to various fields of design, including graphic, fashion, industrial, interior, and architecture. Projects will teach students the concepts and processes that are embedded in these different areas. Students will also learn about the history and significant figures across the world of design. This will be an exciting, hands-on approach that allows students to be creative and curious.

FORENSIC SCIENCE

Students will see science through the eyes of a crime scene investigator. Investigators are trained individuals who collect various types of physical evidence at a crime scene. By walking in the footsteps of a crime scene investigator, students can learn a number of scientific strategies and skills.

PERCUSSION ENSEMBLE

Students with varying musical backgrounds are encouraged to participate in an ensemble that will feature a wide range of percussion instruments. Students will practice pitch, rhythm, and melody, both as individuals and as a collaborative group. A few of the featured instruments will include drums, cymbals, xylophones, bells, and tambourines, among others.

PUBLICATIONS

This class provides students with the opportunity to develop and collaborate on several publications, including the newspaper, *The Rambler*, and the literary magazine, *Equinox*.

Students also share writings and recordings on our podcast.

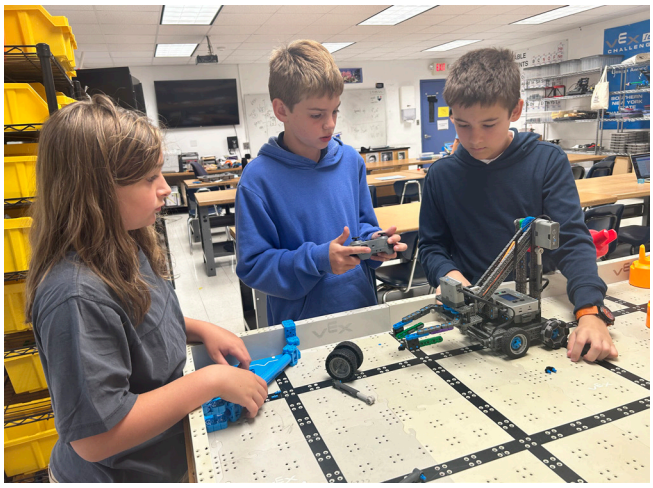
RADIO / BROADCASTING

WHRV is the official Harvey radio station. Students will curate and produce engaging audio programming by mixing music, exploring various genres and artists, and conducting interviews that will be broadcast over the airways for the community to hear. Students will learn the techniques and mechanics of operating the technology in an actual studio space.



ROBOTICS

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



SCENE STUDY

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

STUDIO ART

Students will immerse themselves in a comprehensive overview of various disciplines including drawing, painting, design, printmaking, ceramics, and other areas. Methods and techniques will be practiced, reinforced, and implemented as students complete activities and projects throughout the course. Curiosity and creativity will be skills that are practiced on a daily basis.

Other Aspects of Middle School Academics

STUDY SKILLS

All students in grades 6-8 participate in a dedicated Study Skills course that meets several times each week. This course is designed to help students build the foundational habits necessary for a successful middle school experience. Through direct instruction and hands-on practice, students develop essential skills in organization, time management, note-taking, test preparation, and effective study strategies.

INTERDISCIPLINARY UNITS

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

STUDY HALL

Every middle school student has a scheduled study hall built into their academic day. These sessions are supervised by faculty and offer a structured environment for completing assignments, reviewing material, and seeking additional support. Given that students are engaged in campus activities until 4:45 PM daily, study hall is a key time for managing academic responsibilities.

SPEECH CONTEST

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



POETRY RECITATION CONTEST

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

SPELLING BEE

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

SUMMER READING

In English, the year begins with an assessment of the summer reading assignment. Each student participates in class discussions and then completes a writing assignment in response to the summer reading.

Summer reading allows classes to begin the year having studied and reflected upon a common work of literature. This assignment is considered an important launching step into the English curriculum for the year.

TECHNOLOGY

The Middle School embraces the use of technology to enhance learning. All students have access to chromebooks in every classroom. This allows students to use devices in a responsible manner only for academic purposes.

The main academic platform that is used for accessing and posting assignments is Canvas, which can also be viewed by parents who wish to support their child's learning at home.





The Harvey School

Our purpose is to prepare and inspire students to become independent, adventurous thinkers and engaged, compassionate citizens in courageous pursuit of knowledge and truth.



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