



FLINT HILL
SCHOOL

MIDDLE SCHOOL PROGRAM GUIDE

2021–2022

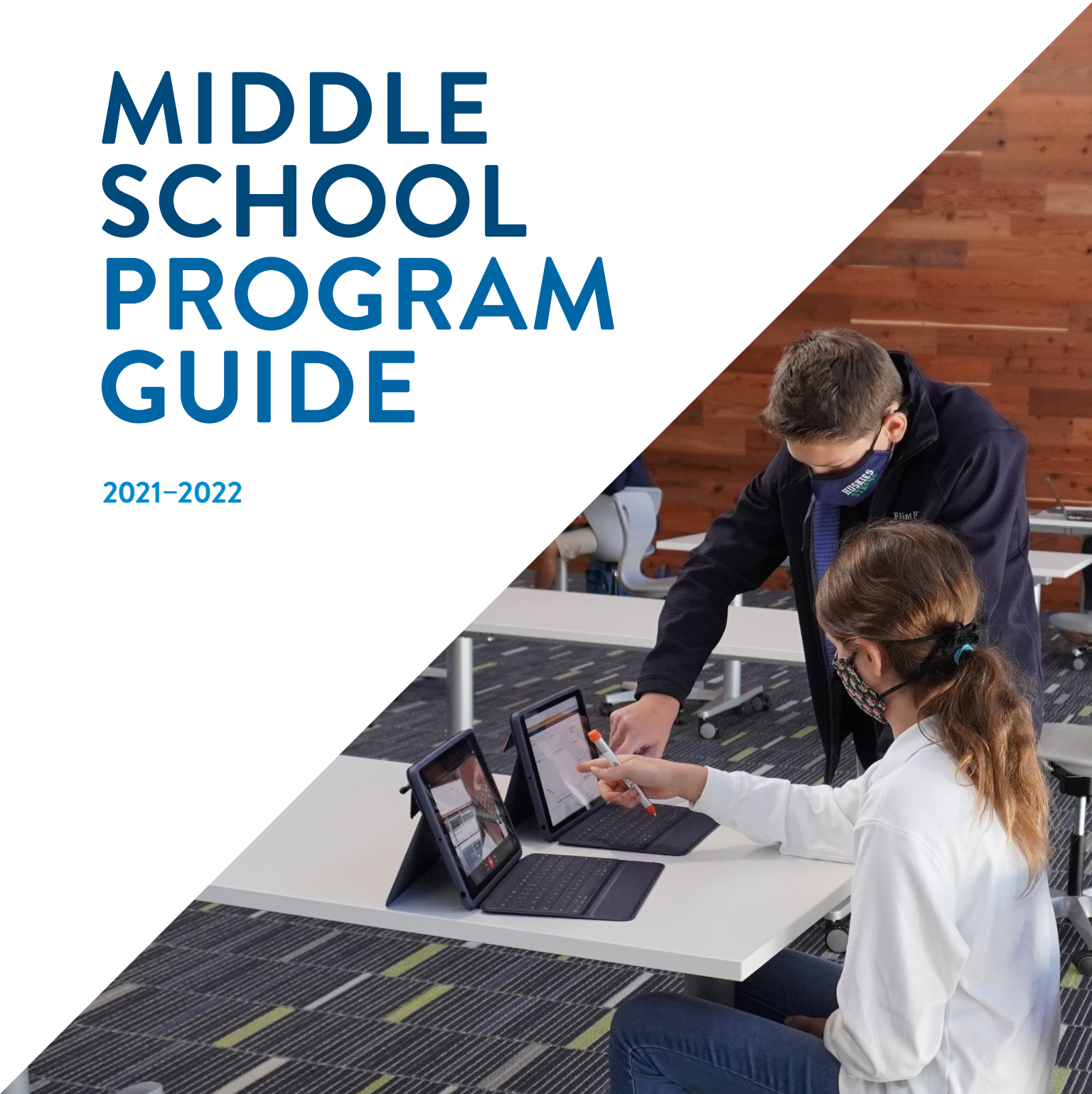


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Mission, Vision and Core Values

Our Mission

A Flint Hill education focuses on the learner. Within a context of strong relationships, we create developmental experiences that embrace the best practices of traditional and contemporary education. Through continuous growth, we actively and thoughtfully implement the ideas and resources that help each student investigate, create and communicate collaboratively and effectively in a rapidly changing, interconnected world.

Our Vision for Every Student

Take meaningful risks. Be yourself. Make a difference.

Core Values

Flint Hill's core values are the fundamental principles that guide all interactions within our School community:

Respect and value all equally

Lead and support with compassion

Act with integrity

Imagine what's possible

Blaze the trail

Middle School Social Contract

During the first few weeks of every school year, students participate in a process in which they create and refine the essential agreements for our division, centered around our core values of respect, responsibility, honesty and compassion. This Social Contract is then signed by all students and adults in the Middle School.

General Program Specifications

Seventh Grade Requirements

English: English 7 or English 7 Honors

Social Studies: Themes in United States History

Math: Foundations in Pre-Algebra, Pre-Algebra, Pre-Algebra Honors, Algebra I Honors

- Placement depends on each student's appropriate level of ability.

Science: Earth and Space Science

Language: French, Latin or Spanish

- One language is required; two courses are possible if a student's schedule allows.
- Multiple levels are available. Appropriate placement depends on each student's relative level of ability.

Fine Arts: Visual Arts, Theater Arts, Music

- Students must choose one; two courses are possible if a student's schedule allows.

Electives: Broadcasting, Computer Science (Coding), Makers, Robotics, MathCounts, Creative Writing / Journalism, Certamen, Learning Center, a second language course, a second Fine Arts course, or Study Hall

Athletics: One sport per season

- Practices are held after classes and until 3:30 p.m. each day, except B-days; away games may run a bit longer.

Eighth Grade Requirements

English: English 8 or English 8 Honors

Social Studies: World Cultures

Math: Foundations in Algebra, Algebra I, Algebra I Honors, Geometry Honors

- Placement depends on each student's appropriate level of ability.

Science: Life and Environmental Science

Language: French, Latin or Spanish

- One language is required; two courses are possible if a student's schedule allows.
- Multiple levels are available. Appropriate placement depends on each student's relative level of ability.

Fine Arts: Visual Arts, Theater Arts, Music

- Students must choose one; two courses are possible if a student's schedule allows.

Electives: Broadcasting, Computer Science (Coding), Makers, Robotics, MathCounts, Creative Writing / Journalism, Certamen, Learning Center, a second language course, a second Fine Arts course, or Study Hall

Athletics: One sport per season

- Practices are held after classes until 3:30 p.m. each day, except B-days; away games may run a bit longer.

Inspiration: All students must present an Inspiration Speech by the end of eighth grade.

Service: All students must complete 10 hours of service by the end of eighth grade.

Seventh Grade

English 7

The goal for this course is to nurture a love for the English language while developing in each student an identity as a reader and a writer by exploring multiple genres. Students are encouraged and expected to make assertions on their own and reinforce those claims with textual support. Students also learn to make connections between and among various literary works. Through structured mini-lessons and individual conferences, students build strength as writers in a range of genres, including free verse poetry, memoir, short story, and the expository essay. This course explores fluency in a variety of expressive modes with an integrated study of vocabulary and grammar. As readers, students participate in roundtable discussions about various features of literature, share independently selected texts through group discussion, and write frequently about their books.

English 7 Honors

This critical thinking course is designed for students with a particular passion or talent for English. The course is typically fast-paced with high expectations. The goal is to develop in each student an identity as a reader and a writer by exploring multiple genres. Through structured mini-lessons and individual conferences, students build strength as writers in a range of genres, including free verse poetry, memoir, short story and the expository essay. Students are encouraged and expected to make assertions on their own and support those claims with textual support. As readers, students participate in roundtable discussions about various features of literature, share independently selected texts through group discussion, and write frequently about their books. Students also learn to make connections between and among various literary works. Students explore fluency in a variety of expressive methods with an integrated study of vocabulary and grammar.

Introduction to Creative Writing and Journalism

Have you ever wondered how to tell a story or write a poem that will entertain or move another person? Have you considered how a reporter crafts a compelling news story? The goal for this semester-length course is to expose students to different methods of creative and journalistic writing, and introduce the basic techniques needed to write effective short stories, poems, news features, and opinion articles. Students read examples of all these forms of content, discuss the challenges of each form, and then try their hands at a variety of pieces. Students read commentary about writing by renowned creative writers and journalists and discuss what it means to be a professional writer. Students produce a portfolio of selected and revised writings as the

culminating project for the course. This course is graded on a pass/fail basis.

Themes in United States History

This course begins with the debate over the framing of the new Constitution (just after the Revolutionary War) and continues to the present day. Students examine the development of the United States from its overthrow of the British monarchy to its emergence as a global superpower at the turn of the century, through the struggles of the Civil Rights movement and with the Soviet Union during the Cold War. The course focuses particularly on essential questions, such as: What is democracy? What is justice? What is the role of the government? What is the role of the U.S. in the world? What are individual rights vs. “the collective” rights? Current events are incorporated as an essential element in understanding all eras and time periods in history, including the present day.

Foundations in Pre-Algebra

This course reviews material from previous math classes and prepares students for the rigors of future math classes. New topics that students explore include: proportions, ratios and rational numbers. This course is designed to create a connection among mathematical ideas and to reinforce foundational concepts and number sense.

Pre-Algebra

This course prepares students for the rigors of Algebra I. Students explore topics such as proportions, ratios, rational numbers, linear relationships and data interpretation. This course is designed to create a connection among mathematical ideas. Problem solving and critical thinking are key components of the course.

Pre-Algebra Honors

This course encompasses the material in Pre-Algebra at a faster pace and goes deeper into more intense levels of problem-solving and mathematical explorations. This course also covers extension topics such as solving multi-step equations, complex fractions, combinations and permutations. This course is designed to reinforce, extend, and enrich students’ reasoning skills as they explore more abstract and advanced topics.

Algebra I Honors

The level of understanding and depth expected in Algebra I Honors is beyond the scope of Algebra I. More topics are covered, content is more rigorous, and students are expected to conduct more independent discovery and investigative work. Additional topics are integrated into the Algebra I curriculum to deepen students’ understanding. Some of the topics include: inverse variation, compound inequalities, systems of equations with three or more unknowns, multiplying polynomials (past monomials and binomials), and introduction to solving quadratics. Students enrolling in Algebra I

Honors are expected to have a strong foundation in pre-algebra skills and number sense, as there is less time spent reviewing these critical skills.

MathCounts and Enrichment

MathCounts is a national enrichment club and competition program promoting Middle School math achievement through a fun and challenging math program. MathCounts inspires excellence, confidence, curiosity, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills. Students work beyond MathCounts and look at various contests, enrichment content and activities. This course is graded on a pass/fail basis.

Science 7 – Earth and Space Science

The year begins with a focus on the properties of matter, which are used as the foundation for explaining the structure of the Earth and its internal layers. Students then explore changes on Earth, both at the surface level (the rock cycle, weathering, erosion and deposition) and below (plate tectonics and accompanying earthquakes and volcanoes). The earlier study of physical properties is revisited during a unit on weather and climate. The year ends with students learning about the relationship between Earth, the sun and the moon before moving to the rest of the solar system and other stars and galaxies in our universe.

French I – Part 1

In this introductory course, students cover several theme-based units that enable them to communicate about themselves and to exchange information on a variety of topics. These units provide an interactive and systematic approach to acquiring grammatical structures, appropriate vocabulary, and cultural information about the French-speaking world. The emphasis is to build comprehension from audio, video, and print sources, and spoken and written communication skills relating to classroom topics and interactions. All activities are designed to encourage students to use the language creatively and independently. Topics include friends and family, school and daily routines, sports and leisure activities, home and mealtimes, and clothes and possessions.

French I – Part 2

This course is fundamentally a review and completion of the work begun in French I – Part 1. The interactive nature of the course encourages students to communicate in French by conversing with each other, expressing themselves both orally and in writing, and reading and understanding French in a variety of print and online sources. The primary goals are to build strong, extensive vocabulary and master basic grammar and syntax for the present and past tenses. An additional goal is to teach students how to communicate in a foreign language without focusing on word-for-word translation. To

accomplish this goal, the target language is used in the classroom for most interactions. Thematic topics familiar to the student include daily interactions relating to school, family, sports and leisure time activities.

Latin I – Part 1

This course is the first part of a two-year course, equivalent to the traditional first year of Latin. The groundwork is laid for all future grammatical study and students begin to acquire a solid foundational vocabulary. A strong emphasis is placed on making connections and comparisons between both grammatical structures and individual words in English and Latin. In addition, students continue their study of classical mythology and Roman history and culture. All students take the National Latin Exam in the spring to benchmark their progress against diverse programs across the country.

Latin I – Part 2

This course is a continuation of Latin I – Part 1. Students complete the traditional first year of Latin. Students deepen their understanding of the grammatical underpinnings of the Latin language by studying increasingly complex vocabulary and syntax, and begin translating longer passages of Latin. In addition, they continue their study of mythology, history and culture. Students successfully completing this course will be prepared to enter any high school Latin II course. All Latin I students take the National Latin Exam in the spring to benchmark their progress against national standards and diverse programs across the country.

Latin I – Part 2 Honors

Latin I Honors students cover an expansion of the vocabulary and grammar curriculum of the regular course. In addition, they are expected to read more extensively, recognize grammar constructions in context, master a larger corpus of vocabulary, do more English to Latin drills and writing, and participate in state and national competitions, including JCL conventions and Certamen. The course includes a more in-depth study of Roman history, civilization and classical mythology along with an intensive study of grammar, syntax and vocabulary. Translation and reading comprehension skills are developed over the course of the year with sentences of gradually increasing complexity and adapted stories. The study of derivation and word origin through the prescribed vocabulary list and enrichment vocabulary is an important focus of this class as well. All Latin I Honors students take the National Latin Exam and the Classical Association of Virginia Latin Tournament in the spring to benchmark their progress against national standards and diverse programs across the country.

Certamen

Certamen is a fast-paced, buzzer-based trivia game about classical mythology, ancient history, Roman culture and the Latin language. Certamen encourages teamwork, inspires dedication and self-motivation, sparks the competitive spirit and promotes the pure fun of learning. To develop basic classical literacy, all students will learn the fundamentals of classical mythology, history, mottoes, geography and etymology. Students will also be encouraged to select an area of specialization and evolve toward expertise in that realm as they hone skills of memorization, recall and language processing. Students will be invited to represent Flint Hill at monthly Saturday tournaments, and top performers will have a chance to try out for the state team representing Virginia at the National Latin Convention. This course is graded on a pass/fail basis.

Introduction to Spanish

This course is for students who have had little or no previous exposure to the language. Students cover several theme-based units that enable them to communicate about themselves and to exchange information on a variety of topics. Throughout the course of the year, students learn basic vocabulary, grammar and language patterns to build communication skills. Brief writing assignments encourage students to use the language independently, while related cultural information provides insight into practices and perspectives of Hispanic communities. Topics generally relate to daily routines and the school day, families, food and leisure activities. While oral communication dominates classroom interactions, reading and media comprehension, written expression, and cultural information complement the coursework. Students who successfully complete this course may be recommended for Spanish I – Part 2 in Middle School (if completed in seventh grade or Spanish I in Upper School (if completed in eighth grade).

Spanish I – Part 1

This course is for students who have had one or more years of exposure to the language and have knowledge of basic vocabulary, including the alphabet and numbers. Several theme-based units enable students to expand existing vocabulary and grammar skills and to develop cultural awareness as they work on comprehension, writing and speaking in the target language. Students participate actively to assimilate new vocabulary and language patterns and then adapt them to communicate about themselves and to exchange information on a variety of topics. Students also review and learn vocabulary related to greetings and classroom communication, time and calendar, family, leisure activities, familiar foods, the school day and related activities, and clothing.

Spanish I – Part 2

This course is a continuation of the language and culture of the Spanish-speaking world. It is an Upper School-level course for Middle School students. This course emphasizes the four language skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing in a “communicative approach” to language learning. Students communicate in Spanish by conversing with each other, expressing themselves in writing, and reading and understanding a variety of audio, video and print materials. Students practice more complex grammatical structures such as commands, the present and preterit tenses of regular, irregular, and reflexive verbs, and object pronouns in conjunction with thematic units familiar to students that include routines and chores, sports, travel, and vacation. Additionally, students focus on interpretive skills by listening and deducing without focusing on word-for-word translation.

Spanish I – Part 2 Honors

This is an accelerated course designed for students who have excelled in previous Spanish language studies. These students have also shown the motivation and interest to delve deeper into the material and expand their knowledge of Spanish-speaking cultures. Students communicate in Spanish by conversing with each other, expressing themselves in written and spoken presentations, and by interpreting a variety of audio, video and print materials. This course covers complex grammatical structures such as commands, the preterit tense, and reflexive verbs in conjunction with thematic units. Additionally, students learn how to better listen and deduce in a foreign language without focusing on word-for-word translation. Students who successfully complete this course may be recommended for Spanish II Honors in the Upper School.

Advanced Band

This year-long course is a combined ensemble of students in seventh and eighth grade who choose to engage in instrumental music with the highest of standards. Students continue to develop their sound and their rhythmic and technical abilities, and also study standard age-appropriate wind repertoire that pushes students to newer and higher musical heights. This is the only Middle School band that travels, and the ensemble performs at the Virginia Band and Orchestra Directors’ Association District XII Assessment, as well as in other opportunities that arise. In addition, the band performs at the winter and spring concerts.

Advanced Chorus

This course is open to students in seventh and eighth grade. Students learn to sing with a free and open tone, read music and practice good concert deportment. The course emphasizes skills in music theory, sight-reading and advanced technical proficiency. Music performance provides students with a unique opportunity to express themselves.

The course focuses not only on proper singing techniques such as posture and breathing, but also includes the study of the musical styles and periods that are being practiced. Daily classes include extensive warm-ups and voice development exercises. Students have numerous opportunities to perform both in and outside of school. Members of this ensemble have the unique opportunity to take part in district ensemble assessments and solo competitions. Weekly practice sheets are a requirement, as are performance opportunities that are scheduled throughout the year. Evaluation is based on a rubric system to provide individualized feedback to each student.

Advanced Orchestra

This course is open to experienced string players in seventh and eighth grade. Instruments include violin, viola, cello and bass. Students are introduced to more difficult levels of music through daily ensemble rehearsals and are expected to perform a variety of string ensemble repertoire with expression and technical accuracy. This course emphasizes mastering skills in sight-reading and basic technical proficiency. Weekly practice outside of class is a requirement, as are performances that are scheduled throughout the year. Students in Advanced Orchestra participate in district-level ensemble assessments when possible. Evaluation is based on a rubric system to provide individualized feedback to each student.

Advanced Percussion

This course is open to experienced percussion students in seventh and eighth grade. Students must demonstrate proficiency on the snare drum, bass drum, cymbals, mallets, drum set and miscellaneous percussion instruments. Students learn to master the rudiments of all percussion instruments and to perform solo and ensemble repertoire with expression and technical accuracy. This course emphasizes skills in music theory, sight-reading and advanced technical proficiency. Weekly practice sheets are a requirement for this class. Performance opportunities are a requirement of the class and are scheduled throughout the year. Evaluation is based on a rubric system to provide individualized feedback to each student. The primary objective is to provide a stimulating musical environment to cultivate interest in the world of percussion.

Theater Arts

This year-long course builds on the fundamentals of drama and allows students to pursue their interest in theater at an advanced level. Students have an opportunity to investigate scene study, theater around the world and improvisation. Students conceive and develop ideas that lead to compelling and authentic written and dramatic narratives. In addition, they bolster acting and directing skills in both improvised and scripted scenes. This course is truly designed to provide students with a diverse and lasting experience in theater. This course combines students from seventh and eighth grade

and represents a two-year curriculum in theater arts. Students may take the course in either grade as a stand-alone course; many students entering in seventh grade take Theater Arts again in eighth grade to experience the full two-year course progression.

Visual Arts

This is a studio-based course in which participants complete a series of long-term projects focusing on the development of skills, ideas and experimental thinking. Through units on design, printmaking, drawing, painting and ceramics, students are introduced to technical, historical and aesthetic aspects of art. Students and the instructor investigate work, respond to questions and issues that arise from it, and consider the directions the artist might take. Balance between planning and experimentation is addressed in each project. Throughout the year, students complete daily sketchbook entries and use their sketchbooks as personal diaries. Students participate in numerous group critiques and learn how to assess their own and others' work. Evaluation and individualized feedback are shared with each student throughout the working process. This course combines students from seventh and eighth grade and represents a two-year curriculum in visual arts. Students may take the course in either grade as a stand-alone course; many students entering in seventh grade take Visual Arts again in eighth grade to experience the full two-year course progression.

Exploration of Programming Languages

In this course, students extend their understanding of Blockly/Visual Programming Languages. Additionally, students learn about other languages, such as HTML and Javascript. Students will understand how these languages can be used for different purposes (creating apps, driving drones, programming code for user input/output and creating websites). To demonstrate their learning, students will select one language in which to create a tangible artifact. This course is graded on a pass/fail basis.

Advanced Programming Skills

This course is designed for students who are ready to work on their own path to advance their programming knowledge. Students work in Python, Javascript, HTML, or other languages. In this independent environment, students receive support from the teacher as well as online resources and platforms as they master new material. By the end of the course, students produce a tangible artifact that represents their newly acquired and applied skills. This course is graded on a pass/fail basis.

Makers

This semester-long course is a self-directed exploration into the world of creative problem solving and engineering. Students work towards proficiency in additive 3D modeling, subtractive 3D modeling, computer programming, electrical engineering and technical writing. Using design thinking, fast prototyping, collaboration, problem-solving, multiple tech tools and careful observation and recording, students complete increasingly difficult challenges that are presented in a rich storytelling environment.

While this is a one semester course, it can be taken multiple times without repetition. This course is graded on a pass/fail basis.

Introduction to Robotics

In this second semester course, students apply programming skills to create functional robots. Instruction resembles real world programming training: teachers act as mentors and guides, providing students with ample opportunities to test and learn, to collaborate and share, and to create. Instructional time is given in short “chunks,” where direct instruction and modeling are interwoven with hands-on learning. Because of the independent nature of the course, students have the option to participate in the course for two or four periods out of the six day cycle. Through the design thinking process, they will collaborate to solve problems in a systematic way to create computing programs. The course covers the foundational skills to deconstruct problems and plan out logical solutions, including variables, syntax tools, conditional statements, loops and flow charting. This course is graded on a pass/fail basis.

Competition Robotics

In this first semester course, students apply programming skills to create functional robots. We use the Lego MINDSTORMS EV3 platform for research, construction and programming. Students in this class will enter the First Lego League (FLL) competition as a team. Instruction resembles real world programming training: teachers act as mentors and guides, providing students with ample opportunity to test and learn, to collaborate and share, and to create. Instructional time and modeling are interwoven with hands-on learning. Students are encouraged to collaborate and to work together to solve problems and to use the design thinking process as a systematic way to create computing programs. The course covers the foundational skills required to transition into the Upper School Robotics program, including variables, syntax tools, conditional statements, loops and flow charting to deconstruct problems and plan out logical solutions. This course is graded on a pass/fail basis.

Robotics Applications

In this second semester course, students will develop an understanding of robotics’ role in the real world through design challenges. The challenges will require planning, construction and programming experience with the Lego Mindstorms EV3 hardware and software. Students identify issues in their community that would benefit from the use of robots. They design, build and program robots that will provide a solution for the identified issue, thus allowing the students to learn more about how robots benefit the real world. Competition Robotics is a prerequisite for this class. This course is graded on a pass/fail basis.

Broadcasting and Communication

Students learn about the foundations of broadcasting through the setup, maintenance and implementation of an audio/video recording studio. Students experience the fundamentals of public communication and production as they produce authentic programming for real audiences, including their fellow Middle School students. Through hands-on, real life application of various broadcast and communications mediums — including video/YouTube, social media and webcasting — students will learn about how to be in front of the camera and behind the scenes as they study script writing, news curation, video camera and studio operations, and post-production editing. Throughout the course, students will learn and apply safe and smart digital footprint strategies. This course is graded on a pass/fail basis.

Eighth Grade

English 8

This course focuses on the transitions needed to prepare for Upper School English. Close attention is given to each student's reading and writing skills. Students learn active and critically-engaged reading of literature, with a focus on interpreting and making meaning out of figurative language. They learn composition and revision skills through a variety of essays and other writing assignments. The goal is for each student taking the course to gain courage and confidence in all aspects of English studies.

English 8 Honors

This critical thinking course is designed for students for whom English is a particular passion or talent. This class is fast-paced with appropriately high expectations. The goal for the course is to develop in each student an identity as a reader and a writer, by exploring multiple genres. Students are encouraged and expected to make assertions on their own and support those claims with textual support. Students also learn to make connections between and among various literary works. The course explores fluency in a variety of expressive methods, with an integrated study of vocabulary and grammar.

Introduction to Creative Writing and Journalism

Have you ever wondered how to tell a story or write a poem that will entertain or move another person? Have you considered how a reporter crafts a compelling news story? The goal for this semester-length course is to expose students to different methods of creative and journalistic writing, and introduce the basic techniques needed to write effective short stories, poems, news features and opinion articles. Students read examples of all these forms of content, discuss the challenges of each form, then try their hands at a variety of pieces. Students read commentary about writing by renowned creative writers and journalists and discuss what it means to be a professional writer. Students produce a portfolio of selected and revised writings as the culminating project for the course. This course is graded on a pass/fail basis.

World Cultures and Geography

This course offers students a global perspective by examining seven cultural regions of the world. In each unit, students explore and analyze the geography, history, religion/philosophies, values systems, cultural factors, political and economic structures, religion, and the concepts of beauty and art. By the end of the course, students can compare these cultural factors with a global perspective. The goal for the course is to prepare students for the ever-growing interdependence of the world in which they will live and work and to help prepare them for their responsibilities as participating citizens of the global society in the 21st century.

Foundations in Algebra I

This course extends student knowledge and understanding of the real number system and its properties through the study of variables, expressions, equations, inequalities

and other early Algebra I topics. This course is designed to create a connection among mathematical ideas and to reinforce foundational concepts so students are prepared for Algebra I the following year.

Algebra I

This course is an in-depth examination of concepts using a functions approach. Many topics from the Pre-Algebra course are reviewed while examining new topics such as linear functions, inequalities, exponents and exponential functions, quadratic equations and functions, polynomials and factoring, rational expressions and radicals. This course extends students' knowledge and understanding of the real number system and its properties through the study of variables, expressions, equations, inequalities and analysis of data derived from real-world phenomena. Emphasis is placed on making connections in algebra to arithmetic, geometry and statistics. Graphing calculators are used to explore graphical, numerical and symbolic relationships.

Algebra I Honors

The level of understanding and depth expected in Algebra I Honors is beyond the scope of Algebra I. More topics are covered, content is more rigorous, and students are expected to conduct more independent discovery and investigative work. Additional topics are integrated into the Algebra I curriculum in order to deepen students' understanding. Some of the topics include inverse variation, compound inequalities, systems of equations with three or more unknowns, multiplying polynomials (past monomials and binomials), and introduction to solving quadratics. Students enrolling in Algebra I Honors are expected to have a strong foundation in pre-algebra skills and number sense, as there is less time spent reviewing these critical skills.

Geometry Honors

This course is a problem-based, hands-on investigation of geometry. Students engage in lessons that focus on developing the critical thinking skills and habits of mind to solve advanced math. Taught through the use of manipulatives, exploration, pattern recognition, and technology applications, students will develop ideas and experiences that lead to formal geometric proofs and postulates. Creative problem solving and ingenuity are critical skills for the course. Students will receive instruction and feedback on their development. Investigations include an introduction to the language of geometry, recognition of invariants, congruence, area and volume, similarity, and circles. Geometry Honors will move at a faster pace while also looking deeper into the previously mentioned topics. Geometry Honors students are expected to comfortably solve problems with less guidance and less direct instruction. Students are required to meet expectations in understanding, mastery and independent application. Students use the TI graphing calculator in the course. Algebra I Honors is a prerequisite to this course.

MathCounts and Enrichment

MathCounts is a national enrichment club and competition program promoting Middle School math achievement through a fun and challenging math program. MathCounts inspires excellence, confidence and curiosity, as well as critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Students work beyond MathCounts and look at various contests, enrichment content and activities. This course is graded on a pass/fail basis.

Science 8 – Life and Environmental Science

This lab-driven course begins by focusing on the structure and function of life. Students build on previously learned information about cells and do hands-on work to study how cells produce energy and how materials move through cells. The spotlight then moves to how cells work together to form organ systems and the way those systems interact in a successful organism; the forensic dissection of a necturus is a centerpiece in this unit. For the second semester, students move into the world of genetics and learn how traits are passed from parents to offspring, with special attention given to real-world scenarios including coat color in dogs and blood type in humans. Finally, the year concludes with a study of how living organisms survive in their environments, how they are dependent on their environmental interactions with other living and nonliving factors, and how those factors impact their success on Earth.

French I – Part 1

In this introductory course, students cover several theme-based units that enable them to communicate about themselves and to exchange information on a variety of topics. These units provide an interactive and systematic approach to acquiring grammatical structures, appropriate vocabulary, and cultural information about the French-speaking world. The emphasis is to build comprehension from audio, video, and print sources, and spoken and written communication skills relating to classroom topics and interactions. All activities are designed to encourage students to use the language creatively and independently. Topics include friends and family, school and daily routines, sports and leisure activities, home and mealtimes, and clothes and possessions.

French I – Part 2

This course is fundamentally a review and completion of the work begun in French I – Part 1. The interactive nature of the course encourages students to communicate in French by conversing with each other, expressing themselves both orally and in writing, and reading and understanding French in a variety of print and online sources. The primary goals are to build strong, extensive vocabulary and master basic grammar and syntax for the present and past tenses. An additional goal is to teach students how to communicate in a foreign language without focusing on word-for-word translation. To accomplish this goal, the target language is used in the classroom for most interactions.

Thematic topics familiar to the student include daily interactions relating to school, family, sports and leisure time activities. Upon completion of Level I – Part 2 courses, students are recommended for Level II or Level II Honors courses in the Upper School.

Latin I - Part 1

This course is the first part of a two-year course, equivalent to the traditional first year of Latin. The groundwork is laid for all future grammatical study and students begin to acquire a solid foundational vocabulary. A strong emphasis is placed on making connections and comparisons between both grammatical structures and individual words in English and Latin. In addition, students continue their study of classical mythology and Roman history and culture. All students take the National Latin Exam in the spring to benchmark their progress against diverse programs across the country.

Latin I – Part 2

This course is a continuation of Latin I – Part 1. Students complete the traditional first year of Latin. Students deepen their understanding of the grammatical underpinnings of the Latin language by studying increasingly complex vocabulary and syntax, and begin translating longer passages of Latin. In addition, they continue their study of mythology, history and culture. Students successfully completing this course will be prepared to enter any high school Latin II course. All Latin I students take the National Latin Exam in the spring to benchmark their progress against national standards and diverse programs across the country.

Latin I – Part 2 Honors

Latin I Honors students cover an expansion of the vocabulary and grammar curriculum of the regular course. In addition, they are expected to read more extensively, recognize grammar constructions in context, master a larger corpus of vocabulary, do more English to Latin drills and writing, and participate in state and national competitions, including JCL conventions and Certamen. The course includes a more in-depth study of Roman history, civilization and classical mythology along with an intensive study of grammar, syntax and vocabulary. Translation and reading comprehension skills are developed over the course of the year with sentences of gradually increasing complexity and adapted stories. The study of derivation and word origin through the prescribed vocabulary list and enrichment vocabulary is an important focus of this class as well. All Latin I Honors students take the National Latin Exam and the Classical Association of Virginia Latin Tournament in the spring to benchmark their progress against national standards and diverse programs across the country.

Introduction to Spanish

This course is for students who have had little or no previous exposure to the language. Students cover several theme-based units that enable them to communicate about

themselves and to exchange information on a variety of topics. Throughout the course of the year, students learn basic vocabulary, grammar and language patterns to build communication skills. Brief writing assignments encourage students to use the language independently, while related cultural information provides insight into practices and perspectives of Hispanic communities. Topics generally relate to daily routines and the school day, families, sports and leisure activities. While oral communication dominates classroom interactions, reading and media comprehension, written expression, and cultural information complement the coursework. Students who successfully complete this course may be recommended for Spanish I – Part 2 in Middle School (if completed in seventh grade), or Spanish I in Upper School (if completed in eighth grade).

Spanish I – Part 1

This course is for students who have had one or more years of exposure to the language and have knowledge of basic vocabulary, including the alphabet and numbers. Several theme-based units enable students to expand existing vocabulary and grammar skills and to develop cultural awareness as they work on comprehension, writing, and speaking in the target language. Students participate actively to assimilate new vocabulary and language patterns and then adapt them to communicate about themselves and to exchange information on a variety of topics. Students review and learn vocabulary associated with topics that include greetings and classroom communication, time and calendar, animals, familiar foods, the school day and related activities, and clothing.

Spanish I – Part 2

This course is a continuation of the language and culture of the Spanish-speaking world. It is an Upper School-level course for Middle School students. This course emphasizes the four language skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing in a “communicative approach” to language learning. Students communicate in Spanish by conversing with each other, expressing themselves in writing, and reading and understanding a variety of audio, video, and print materials. Students practice more complex grammatical structures such as commands, the present and preterit tenses of regular, irregular, and reflexive verbs, and object pronouns in conjunction with thematic units familiar to students that include routine and chores, sports, travel, and vacation. Additionally, students focus on interpretive skills by listening and deducing without focusing on word-for-word translation. Upon completion of the Level I – Part 2 courses, students are recommended for Level II or Level II Honors courses in the Upper School.

Spanish I – Part 2 Honors

This is an accelerated course designed for students who have excelled in previous Spanish language studies. These students have also shown the motivation and interest

to delve deeper into the material and expand their knowledge of Spanish-speaking cultures. Students communicate in Spanish by conversing with each other, expressing themselves in written and spoken presentations, and by interpreting a variety of audio, video and print materials. This course covers complex grammatical structures such as commands, the preterit tenses, and reflexive verbs in conjunction with thematic units. Additionally, students learn how to better listen and deduce in a foreign language without focusing on word-for-word translation. Students who successfully complete this course may be recommended for Spanish II Honors in the Upper School.

Advanced Band

This year-long course is a combined ensemble of students in seventh and eighth grade who choose to engage in instrumental music with the highest of standards. Students continue to develop their sound and their rhythmic and technical abilities, and also study standard age-appropriate wind repertoire that pushes students to newer and higher musical heights. This is the only Middle School band that travels, and the ensemble performs at the Virginia Band and Orchestra Directors' Association District XII Assessment. In addition, the band performs at the winter and spring concerts.

Advanced Chorus

Students learn to sing with a free and open tone, read music and practice good concert deportment. The course emphasizes skills in music theory, sight-reading and advanced technical proficiency. Music performance provides students with a unique opportunity to express themselves. The course focuses not only on proper singing techniques such as posture and breathing, but also includes the study of the musical styles and periods that are being practiced. Daily classes include extensive warm-ups and voice development exercises. Students have numerous opportunities to perform both in and outside of school. Members of this ensemble have the unique opportunity to take part in local festivals and solo competitions. Weekly practice sheets are a requirement, as are performance opportunities that are scheduled throughout the year. Evaluation is based on a rubric system to provide individualized feedback to each student.

Advanced Orchestra

This course is open to experienced string players in seventh and eighth grade. Instruments include violin, viola, cello and bass. Students are introduced to more difficult levels of music through daily ensemble rehearsals and are expected to perform a variety of string ensemble repertoire with expression and technical accuracy. This course emphasizes mastering skills in sight-reading and basic technical proficiency. Weekly practice outside of class is a requirement, as are performances that are

scheduled throughout the year. Evaluation is based on a rubric system to provide individualized feedback to each student.

Advanced Percussion

This course is open to experienced percussion students in seventh and eighth grade. The primary objective is to provide a stimulating musical environment to cultivate interest in the world of percussion. Students must demonstrate proficiency on the snare drum, bass drum, cymbals, mallets, drum set and miscellaneous percussion instruments. Students learn to master the rudiments of all percussion instruments and to perform solo and ensemble repertoire with expression and technical accuracy. This course emphasizes skills in music theory, sight-reading and advanced technical proficiency. Weekly practice sheets are a requirement for this class. Performance opportunities are a requirement of the class and are scheduled throughout the year. Evaluation is based on a rubric system to provide individualized feedback to each student.

Theater Arts

This year-long course builds on the fundamentals of drama and allows students to pursue their interest in theater at an advanced level. Students have an opportunity to investigate scene study, theater around the world and improvisation. Students conceive and develop ideas that lead to compelling and authentic written and dramatic narratives. In addition, they bolster acting and directing skills in both improvised and scripted scenes. This course is truly designed to provide students with a diverse and lasting experience in theater. This course combines students from seventh and eighth grade and represents a two-year curriculum in theater arts. Students may take the course in either grade as a stand-alone course; many students entering in seventh grade take Theater Arts again in eighth grade to experience the full two-year course progression.

Visual Arts

This is a studio-based course in which participants complete a series of long-term projects focusing on the development of skills, ideas and experimental thinking. Through units on design, printmaking, drawing, painting, and ceramics, students are introduced to technical, historical, and aesthetic aspects of art. Students and the instructor investigate work, respond to questions and issues that arise from it, and consider the directions the artist might take. Balance between planning and experimentation is addressed in each project. Throughout the year, students complete daily sketchbook entries and use their sketchbooks as personal diaries. Students participate in numerous group critiques and learn how to assess their own and others' work. Evaluation and individualized feedback are shared with each student throughout the working process. This course combines students from seventh and eighth grade and represents a two-year curriculum in visual arts. Students may take the course in

either grade as a stand-alone course; many students entering in seventh grade take Visual Arts again in eighth grade to experience the full two-year course progression.

Certamen

Certamen is a fast-paced, buzzer-based trivia game about classical mythology, ancient history, Roman culture and the Latin language. Certamen encourages teamwork, inspires dedication and self-motivation, sparks the competitive spirit, and promotes the pure fun of learning. To develop basic classical literacy, all students learn the fundamentals of classical mythology, history, mottoes, geography, and etymology. Students are also encouraged to select an area of specialization and evolve toward expertise in that realm as they hone skills of memorization, recall, and language processing. Students will be invited to represent Flint Hill at monthly Saturday tournaments, and top performers will have a chance to try out for the state team representing Virginia at the National Latin Convention. This course is graded on a pass/fail basis.

Exploration of Programming Languages

In this course, students extend their understanding of Blockly/Visual Programming Languages. Additionally, students learn about other languages, such as HTML and Javascript. Students will understand how these languages can be used for different purposes (creating apps, driving drones, programming code for user input/output, and creating websites). To demonstrate their learning, students will select one language in which to create a tangible artifact. This course is graded on a pass/fail basis.

Advanced Programming Skills

This course is designed for students who are ready to work on their own path to advance their programming knowledge. Students will work in Python, Javascript, HTML, or other languages. In this independent environment, students will receive support from the teacher as well as online resources and platforms as they master new material. By the end of the course, students will produce a tangible artifact that represents their newly acquired and applied skills. This course is graded on a pass/fail basis.

Makers

This semester-long course is a self-directed exploration into the world of creative problem solving and engineering. Students work towards proficiency in additive 3D modeling, subtractive 3D modeling, computer programming, electrical engineering and technical writing. Using design thinking, fast prototyping, collaboration, problem-solving, multiple tech tools, and careful observation and recording, students complete increasingly difficult challenges that are presented in a rich storytelling environment. This course is graded on a pass/fail basis.

Introduction to Robotics

In this second semester course, students apply programming skills to create functional robots. Instruction resembles real world programming training; teachers act as mentors and guides, providing students with ample opportunity to test and learn, to collaborate and share, and to create. Instructional time is given in short “chunks,” where direct instruction and modeling are interwoven with hands-on learning. Because of the independent nature of the course, students have the option to participate in the course for two or four periods out of the six day cycle. Through the design thinking process, they collaborate to solve problems in a systematic way to create computing programs. The course covers the foundational skills to deconstruct problems and plan out logical solutions, including variables, syntax tools, conditional statements, loops, and flow charting. This course is graded on a pass/fail basis.

Competition Robotics

In this first semester course, students apply programming skills to create functional robots. We use the Lego MINDSTORMS EV3 platform for research, construction and programming. Students in this class will enter the First Lego League (FLL) competition as a team. Instruction resembles real world programming training; teachers act as mentors and guides, providing students with ample opportunity to test and learn, to collaborate and share, and to create. Instructional time and modeling are interwoven with hands-on learning. Students are encouraged to collaborate and to work together to solve problems and to use the design thinking process as a systematic way to create computing programs. The course covers the foundational skills required to transition into the Upper School Robotics program, including variables, syntax tools, conditional statements, loops, and flowcharting to deconstruct problems and plan out logical solutions. This course is graded on a pass/fail basis.

Robotics Applications

In this second semester course, students develop an understanding of robotics’ role in the real world through design challenges. The challenges require planning, construction and programming experience with the Lego MINDSTORMS EV3 hardware and software. Students will identify issues in their community that would benefit from the use of robots. They design, build and program robots that will provide a solution for the identified issue, thus allowing the students to learn more about how robots benefit the real world. Competition Robotics is a prerequisite for this class. This course is graded on a pass/fail basis.

Broadcasting and Communication

Students learn about the foundations of broadcasting through the setup, maintenance and implementation of an audio/video recording studio. Students experience the fundamentals of public communication and production as they produce authentic programming for real audiences, including their fellow Middle School students. Through hands-on, real life application of various broadcast and communications mediums — including video/YouTube, social media, and webcasting — students learn about how to be in front of the camera and behind the scenes as they study script writing, news curation, video camera and studio operations, and post-production editing. Throughout the course, students learn and apply safe and smart digital footprint strategies. This course is graded on a pass/fail basis.

Capstone Presentations

As part of a long-standing Flint Hill tradition, each student in eighth grade will deliver a presentation on a personal or meaningful topic to their classmates in the Olson Theater. Following a process that is built into the school day and mentored by faculty and staff, students will engage in structured reflection, creatively develop their ideas, and learn and practice effective public speaking and presentation skills. In this tangible expression of our vision statement, we encourage students to be creative and true to themselves as they select their topic, refine their narrative, and craft their delivery. The Capstone Presentation is a community-building experience and the culmination of personal and intellectual development throughout Middle School.

Athletic Program

Middle School are required to participate in one sport each season, and the Middle School Athletic Program provides a variety of options:

	<u>Boys</u>	<u>Girls</u>
Fall	Cross Country Football Soccer	Cross Country Field Hockey Soccer Tennis Volleyball
Winter	Basketball Conditioning Outdoor Soccer Swimming	Basketball Conditioning Dance Outdoor Soccer Swimming
Spring	Baseball Lacrosse Tennis Track	Lacrosse Softball Track

There are generally two teams for each sport: Blue and Green.

- Blue teams are composed of students who are more experienced in a particular sport.
- Green teams are composed of students who are still developing their skills and overall understanding of team concepts.

There are some exceptions to this general team structure:

- Cross country does not break into teams according to ability. As a co-educational sport, boys and girls share the same coaches and often practice together, but compete in single-sex teams.
- Basketball adds a third-level team: White. In the case of basketball, the Blue team is composed of students who are more experienced, the Green team is a mix of experienced students and those still developing their skills and understanding, and the White team is composed of students who are still

developing their skills and overall understanding of team concepts.

Theater

In addition to the curricular Theater Arts classes, students may participate in the annual Middle School Play as performers, production assistants, light/sound technicians, or backstage crew members. Rehearsals take place after school in preparation for matinee and evening performances in the Olson Theater on the Lower School Campus. Over the past 10 years, the Middle School play has featured the following plays and musicals:

Grades 7 and 8

“The Addams Family” (2020)

“Tapestry” (2019)

“Mulan” (2018)

“Legends in a Snowfall” (2017)

“Fiddler on the Roof” (2016)

“Whodunnit?” (2015)

“Once on This Island” (2014)

“Alice” (2013)

“Guys and Dolls” (2012)

“Macbeth” (2011)

Student Activities

Student Council Association (SCA)

The SCA is the primary leadership organization in the Middle School and is open to all interested students. The group provides students with a forum in which to:

- Organize and sponsor student life activities
- Represent the interests of the Middle School students
- Promote class and School unity
- Develop opportunities for leadership in its students
- Promote the ideal of service within the greater Flint Hill School community

Student Support

Advisory Program

In the Middle School, we recognize the unique challenges facing students in early adolescence and the importance of developing impactful, trusting relationships and a climate of physical, emotional and intellectual safety. Our Advisory Program fosters a sense of belonging and personal development for each student while building a community within the advisory group. Each student is matched with a caring adult who will guide and support each student's social, emotional, academic and physical growth while serving as the connection between the student, teachers, coaches and parents. Our advisory structure and activities are rooted in the philosophy of [Developmental Designs](#), and all of our advisors undergo training to ensure consistent and effective implementation.

We spend the first 20 minutes of each day in advisories on group- and skill-building activities called the Circle of Power and Respect (CPR). The CPR structure is implemented consistently across the building and includes four components:

- **Greeting** — to learn names, practice courtesy, and acknowledge each other's presence
- **Sharing** — to get to know one another and practice the art of conversation
- **Activity** — to have fun, engage, cooperate, include all, develop self-control and spark academic learning
- **Daily News** — to greet, inform, and teach skills through posted written information (typically our Middle School Morning Announcements) and student responses

The principles of [Developmental Designs](#) help to create an inclusive learning community and to help students build relationships, develop social skills and engage with their learning. The approach is founded upon seven evidence-based principles that form the core of successful teaching and learning in the middle grades:

1. Knowing the physical, emotional, social and intellectual needs of the students we teach is as important as knowing the content we teach.
2. People learn best by actively constructing their own understanding and meaning.
3. The greatest cognitive growth occurs when learning is leveraged by social interaction.
4. Goals are best achieved through the incremental mastery of tasks.
5. Social learning in a supportive community is as important to success as academic learning.

6. There is a set of personal/social skills that students need to learn and practice in order to be successful socially and academically: cooperation, assertion, responsibility, empathy and self-control.
7. Trust among adults is a fundamental necessity for academic and social success.

Wellness Seminars

Substance Abuse Prevention

The seventh grade Wellness and Life Skills program focuses on substance abuse prevention and is taught in two week-long seminars. The nationally-recognized Project ALERT Program is used, which includes both factual content about abused substances and strategies for making healthy choices and resisting negative social pressures. The goal of Project ALERT is to reduce the use of abused substances by keeping non-users from trying them and by preventing non-users and experimenters from becoming regular users. Videos with older teens modeling effective ways of saying “No” are shown as a lead-in to students engaging in role-plays to practice using refusal skills. Materials developed by Human Relations Media are also utilized to augment the Project ALERT materials.

Human Sexuality

The Human Sexuality Seminar is taught to all eighth grade students over one week. Topics include a brief review of the physiological changes of puberty and the sexual reproductive system, an overview of sexually-transmitted diseases, and an introduction to the topic of abstinence and pregnancy prevention. Additionally, multiple class periods are devoted to exploring family and individual values and relating them to healthy interpersonal relationships. All material is presented in a developmentally-appropriate manner and is respectful of the diversity and unique needs of each student in the classroom.

Alcohol and Drug Awareness

The Alcohol and Drug Awareness seminar is taught to all eighth grade students by a drug and alcohol educator. Topics for this week-long seminar include an overview of addiction, an explanation of the impact of drugs and alcohol on the body, effective peer intervention and strategies for non-use. Through discussion and activity, students learn self-advocacy and prevention strategies. All material is presented in a developmentally-appropriate manner and is respectful of the needs of each student in the classroom.

The Learning Center

In the Middle School, the Learning Center supports students with documented learning differences. The program provides support to students in academics, organization and time management, and parallels the developmental growth that occurs during these crucial years. Communication with the learning specialists, teachers, counselors and parents is ongoing during the Middle School years to ensure success for all students who use the Learning Center.

In the Middle School, each student who receives direct support from the Learning Center is assigned to a learning specialist who serves as his/her academic coach. Students meet with their coaches on a regularly scheduled basis for one-on-one, 25 to 30-minute sessions, which take place during elective periods. In their initial meetings, academic coaches help each student set goals, outline action steps and create a plan for accountability. Coaching sessions keep students on track and allow them to quickly address obstacles that interfere with progress. While the focus of coaching is primarily academic, it weaves in other commitments the student may have such as athletics, fine arts and service learning. Updates on goals and action steps are emailed to parents from the learning specialists once every quarter.

When not working directly with a learning specialist in a coaching session, Middle School students who use the Learning Center attend a study session. Held in classrooms and staffed by a classroom teacher, students receive structure and academic support to help them complete the action steps they have identified.

MIDDLE SCHOOL DAILY SCHEDULE

	A	B	C	D	E	F
7:50- 8:10	Advisory	Advisory	Advisory	Advisory	Advisory	Advisory
8:15- 9:10						
9:10-9:30	BREAK	BREAK	BREAK	BREAK	BREAK	BREAK
9:35-10:30						
10:35-11:30						
11:30-12:15	Lunch/ ASH	Lunch/ ASH	Lunch/ ASH	Lunch/ ASH	Lunch/ ASH	Lunch/ ASH
12:20-1:15						
1:20-2:15			FLEX until 1:45			FLEX until 1:45
2:20- 3:30	Athletics	ASH/ Capstone	Athletics *1:50-3:30	Athletics	Athletics	Athletics *1:50-3:30