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Middle School Curriculum

The Middle School program consists of five core academic subjects: English, mathematics, science, social studies, and Spanish. There are four special subjects: religion, music, art, and physical education. Students move from class to class and work with subject specialist teachers in all academic areas. In addition to the subjects listed, each student also attends Life Skills.

The English Program promotes an understanding and appreciation of literature and strengthens basic writing skills. As they read and study fiction of various genres, non-fiction, short stories from the Junior Great Books Program, plays, poetry, and films, students develop evaluative reading, thinking, and communication skills. In response to literature, students acquire thinking, planning, drafting, and editing skills through expository, narrative, and creative writing. Students also continue to study English grammar, spelling, and vocabulary.

The Middle School mathematics program uses the University of Chicago Mathematics Project. Pre-Transitions Mathematics is studied in grade 5, and Transitions Mathematics is studied in grade 6. In seventh and eighth grades a student is placed in one of two programs: Algebra 1, Part 1 in 7th grade followed by Algebra 1, Part 2 in 8th grade or Algebra 1 in 7th grade followed by Geometry in 8th grade. This program uses a multi-dimensional approach emphasizing skills, properties, uses, and representations. The program stresses problem solving and the use of real-life applications.

The science program promotes an active learning process where students build a strong knowledge of scientific process, principles, and ideas as well as develop inquiry skills for problem solving in both an analytical and creative manner. The content covers: science as inquiry, physical science, life science, Earth science, the role of science in society and technology, and the history and nature of science. A highlight of the Princeton Academy science program is the Independent Science Project (ISP). Each year students in grades 5 through 8 pose a problem, research related information, design a controlled experiment, troubleshoot, analyze data, draw conclusions, write a detailed report, and present the completed project to a panel of scientists at the annual Science Exposition.

The social studies program aims to develop and strengthen our students' skills in reading and research, observation and listening, recording and organization, interpretation and analysis, and clarity in written work. Students are encouraged to think critically, formulate their own opinions about the past, and apply what they have learned to the present day. The program spans the history of humankind beginning in the fifth grade with the study of the earliest civilizations across the world, and concluding in the eighth grade with a study of the 20th Century.

The middle school Spanish program presents an integrated skills approach to Spanish. Both receptive (listening and reading) and productive (speaking and writing) proficiencies are developed. The primary objective of the program is to offer students an opportunity to acquire communicative skills while developing an awareness and appreciation of the Hispanic cultures. The proficiency-oriented instruction provides continuous comprehensible input and engaging, personalized lessons to make everything student-centered. The middle school Spanish program covers the vocabulary and grammar taught through an intermediate high school level.

The religion program in 5th and 6th grade is scripture based. Fifth grade students study the Old Testament and sixth grade students explore the New Testament. Seventh and eighth grade students become acquainted with the basic dimensions of the world's major religions. Each student emerges from this course with a greatly enhanced understanding of the people who adhere to the world's major religions. A variety of classroom activities including discussions, skits, art, music, guest speakers, prayer, and meditation allow opportunities to learn in meaningful and interesting ways. Journaling is introduced to help each student reflect and grow in his personal faith journey.

The music program aims to create fully engaged, independent musicians who can hear, understand, read, write, compose, and improvise music. Middle School students have the option to choose an instrumental track (strings or band) or a general music track. Students in both tracks have opportunities to perform.

The art program is designed to provide students with the study of aesthetics, art criticism, art history, and art production. Students explore and learn a variety of art activities and techniques including art history, art appreciation, aesthetic awareness, technical skills, and problem solving.

The physical education program encourages students to improve their physical endurance, strength, and flexibility as they learn to play or improve skills in a variety of sports. The students learn the importance of team play and good sportsmanship. The program's goal is to develop lifelong habits of fitness.

The Life Skills program is designed to introduce topics such as study skills, drug/alcohol awareness, sexuality and other health issues within a context of developing strong interpersonal and decision-making skills. An objective of the program is for students to learn to take responsibility for their own learning, thus preparing not only for the challenges of their continuing education, but also for life. Emphasis is placed on organization, time management, and work habits in the 5th and 6th grade. As students move on to 7th and 8th grade, they learn to advocate for themselves both inside and outside the classroom.

Our curriculum matrix (on the following pages) focuses on the main features of each grade.

Subject	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8
English	Literature: Courage Theme: Fiction of Various Genres, Non-Fiction, Short Stories, Plays, Poetry, and Films, Types of Writing: Expository, Persuasive, Descriptive, and Narrative including Poetry, Sentence Structure, Basic and Expanded Paragraph Grammar, Spelling, and Vocabulary Oral Communication	Literature: Friendship Theme: Fiction of Various Genres, Non-Fiction, Short Stories, Plays, Poetry, and Films, Types of Writing: Expository, Persuasive, Descriptive, and Narrative including Poetry,: Sentence Structure, Expanded Paragraph, Multiple Paragraph Compositions Grammar, Spelling, and Vocabulary Oral Communication	Literature: Conflict Theme: Fiction of Various Genres, Non-Fiction, Short Stories, Plays, Poetry, and Films, Types of Writing: Expository, Persuasive, Descriptive, and Narrative including Poetry,: Enrich Paragraph Development and Multiple Paragraph Compositions Grammar, Spelling, and Vocabulary Oral Communication	Literature: 20 th Century American Literature: Fiction of Various Genres, Non-Fiction, Short Stories, Plays, Poetry, and Films, Types of Writing: Expository, Persuasive, Descriptive, and Narrative including Poetry,: Extends Multiple Paragraph Compositions through Analytical Responses Grammar, Spelling, and Vocabulary Oral Communication
Spanish	Spanish1, Part 1, Communication Skills: Listening, Reading, Speaking, Writing, Vocabulary, Grammar: Present, Awareness and Appreciation of Hispanic Culture	Spanish 1, Part 2 Communication Skills: Listening, Reading, Speaking, Writing, Vocabulary, Grammar: Present and Introduction to Preterit, Awareness and Appreciation of Hispanic Culture	Spanish 2, Part 1 Communication Skills: Listening, Reading, Speaking, Writing, Vocabulary, Grammar: Preterit, Imperfect, and Pronouns, Awareness and Appreciation of Hispanic Culture	Spanish 2, Part 2 Communication Skills: Listening, Reading, Speaking, Writing, Vocabulary, Grammar: Preterit and Imperfect Usage, Future, Conditional, and Progressives, Awareness and Appreciation of Hispanic Culture
Mathematics	Pre-Transition Math Numbers and Numeration, Operations and Computations, Data and Chance, Measurement and Reference Frames, Geometry, Patterns, Functions, and Algebra, Problem Solving, Real World Application	Transition Math Applied Arithmetic, Algebra Concepts and Skills, Geometry Concepts and Skills, Measurement, Probability, and Statistics, Problem Solving, Real World Application	Algebra 1, Part 1 or Algebra 1	Algebra 1, Part 2 or Geometry
Social Studies	Beginning of Mankind, Archeology Simulation, Mesopotamia, Egypt, China, India, Skills: Communication, Organization, and Data Recording	Greece, Rome, Persia, Islam Middle Ages, Expansion of Trade, Renaissance, Reformation Skills: Communication, Organization, and Data Recording	American Exploration, Colonial Life, Revolutionary Period, Creation of the American Constitution, The Early Years of the United States, Civil War Era Skills: Communication, Organization, and Data Recording	Reconstruction, Industrialization, Immigration, Growth of Cities, World War I, 1920s, Great Depression, World War II, Cold War Skills: Communication, Organization, and Data Recording

Science	Science Foundations, Simple Machines, Animal Behavior, Forensic Science, Independent Science Project, Science Process Skills and Evaluative Thinking	Human Biology and Health, Chemical Building Blocks, Earth Forces, Independent Science Project, Science Process Skills and Evaluative Thinking	Environmental Science: Living Earth, Forces and Motion, Microbiology and Botany, Independent Science Project, Science Process Skills and Evaluative Thinking	Environmental Science, Systems Thinking, Cells and Heredity, Chemical Interactions, Comparative Anatomy, Independent Science Project, Science Process Skills and Evaluative Thinking
Religion	Old Testament Abraham, Creation Story, Moses, Israelites, David, Bible Skills, Journaling, Prayer and Meditation	New Testament Jesus Christ: Pre-Ministry, Miracle Ministry, Teaching Ministry, Paschal Ministry, Bible Skills, Journaling, Prayer and Meditation	World Religions, Part 1 Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Sacred Text Use, Journaling, Prayer and Meditation	World Religions, Part 2 Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Sacred Text Use, Journaling, Prayer and Meditation
Music	Instrumental Track: Strings or Band, Individual Instruments, Ensemble Playing, and Performances General Music Track: Music History, Appreciation, and Theory, Performances	Instrumental Track: Strings or Band, Individual Instruments, Ensemble Playing, and Performances General Music Track: Music History, Appreciation, and Theory, Performances	Instrumental Track: Strings or Band, Individual Instruments, Ensemble Playing, and Performances General Music Track: Music History, Appreciation, and Theory, Performances	Instrumental Track: Strings or Band, Individual Instruments, Ensemble Playing, and Performances General Music Track: Music History, Appreciation, and Theory, Performances
Art	Art Skills and Techniques, Art History, Art Appreciation, Aesthetic Awareness, Technical Skills, Problem Solving	Art as a Visual Record, Art Skills and Techniques, Art History, Art Appreciation, Aesthetic Awareness, Technical Skills, Problem Solving	Art By Doing Art, Art Skills and Techniques, Art History, Art Appreciation, Aesthetic Awareness, Technical Skills, Problem Solving.	Integration of Art History and Significant Artists of the Impressionist and Contemporary Periods, Art Skills and Techniques, Art Appreciation, Aesthetic Awareness, Technical Skills, Problem Solving, Grade 8 Mural
Physical Education	Athletic Skills, Sportsmanship, and Team Play: Soccer, Football, Volleyball, Basketball, Hockey, Wiffleball, Pickle Ball, and Fitness Related Activities	Athletic Skills, Sportsmanship, and Team Play: Soccer, Football, Volleyball, Basketball, Hockey, Wiffleball, Pickle Ball, and Fitness Related Activities	Athletic Skills, Sportsmanship, and Team Play: Soccer, Football, Volleyball, Basketball, Hockey, Wiffleball, Pickle Ball, and Fitness Related Activities	Athletic Skills, Sportsmanship, and Team Play: Soccer, Football, Volleyball, Basketball, Hockey, Wiffleball, Pickle Ball, and Fitness Related Activities