TRINITY MIDDLE SCHOOL CURRICULUM GUIDE

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Letter from the Principal of the Middle School

Dear Middle School Families,

I am excited to share with you the curriculum guide for the 2019-2020 school year. Trinity’s mission to “challenge the minds, fire the imaginations, and train the bodies of the young people” with whom we work is alive and well in the middle school!

This document captures only a glimpse of the magic that will take place in classrooms. The articulation of curriculum is no small feat, and I am appreciative of the efforts of the many people who contributed to the creation of this document. As you read through these course descriptions, I imagine that you will be as astonished as I am by how fortunate our students are to have such a wide variety of classes during their middle school experience. It is a privilege for me to observe the processes of teaching and learning as students are inspired by our excellent educators to dive into the depths of their subject matter.

The information in this guide should serve as background and context for later communications, and I encourage you to reach out directly to teachers during the year as you formulate questions or a desire for more insight into what is taking place in their classrooms.

Sincerely,

Jason Ford
Middle School Principal
Trinity School
Grade 5 Course Descriptions

Ceramics 5 (meets 3 times over a 7 day cycle)
Students work in clay, focusing on various methods of hand building. The goal is to advance beyond the skill level achieved in the Lower School and to deal with interactive imagery and subject matter. The work of professional artists is studied and incorporated into projects. Students look at the pottery of other cultures and include these influences in their work. For students who are experiencing ceramics for the first time, the basic step-by-step process is an important ingredient.

Chorus 5 (meets 3 times over a 7 day cycle)
Students focus on learning the difference between their head-voice and chest-voice. Students spend the majority of time learning how to match pitch through the use of solfege. Part-singing is introduced. In addition to performing during Middle School special events, the ensembles perform at the winter and spring concerts. The repertoire that the ensemble prepares is diverse, focusing on both western and multi-cultural themes.

English 5 (meets 5 times over a 7 day cycle)
The grade 5 English curriculum seeks to build literacy and writing skills through close reading of literature, construction of sound paragraphs and development of both creative and analytic writing. The English curriculum is thematically and often culturally and historically linked to the history curriculum. Students read a variety of literary genres and focus much attention on character development and appreciation of the language and style elements in a text. Students usually answer study questions and often use the ideas in the literature as a springboard for creative writing. A balance between creative and analytic work is maintained throughout the year. The students write expository essays, stories, poems, journal entries and book reports. The mechanics of writing and grammar are taught both contextually and directly and include a review of topics covered in grade four. Special attention is paid to parts of speech (verbs, nouns, pronouns, adjectives, and adverbs in particular), sentences, phrases and punctuation such as commas, colons, and apostrophes.

French 5 (meets 5 times over a 7 day cycle)
In 5th grade French, great emphasis is placed on conversation and negotiation in lifelike situations. Students study vocabulary and grammatical structures that enable them to talk and write about daily life in the present tense, as well as interact with their peers, using mainly the target language. They learn to talk about themselves and their family, school life, as well as their likes and dislikes. Students are exposed to the French-speaking world and culture, as we look more specifically at the Ile de France region and Quebec. Video clips, songs, picture books, games, and interactive websites are used to further the students' understanding and interest in the language and culture. Students use the textbook and workbooks (Cahier d’activités and Cahier de vocabulaire et de Grammaire) from Bien Dit 1(Chapters 1 to 3).

Health 5 (meets 1 time over a 7 day cycle)
Students meet in homeroom groups to discuss issues related to pre-adolescence. The first unit, “Mirrors & Windows,” examines the way we perceive ourselves and others. This unit focuses on issues related to diversity, identity, stereotypes, social relationships and awareness of self and others. The first unit is taught by the MS Health Curriculum Coordinator, Middle School Psychologist, Director of Diversity and faculty. The second unit centers around alcohol and other drug use prevention (including tobacco), and the third unit reviews and introduces topics related to puberty and reproduction. The second and third units are taught by the MS Health Curriculum Coordinator and Middle School Psychologist.
History 5 (meets 5 times over a 7 day cycle)
The Grade 5 History course introduces students to the methods of historical study through an investigation of ancient world history and geography. Students begin to learn how to read a textbook, how to take class and reading notes, and how to prepare for in-class assessments. Students in Grade 5 History will learn about the civilization of Ancient India and the growth of Hinduism and Buddhism and the civilization of Ancient China, its founding dynasties, and the development of Confucianism and Taoism. Students will also investigate the history and culture of the important trade regions in East and West Africa and will learn the history of South Africa through the twentieth century. In addition to the textbook, students will read primary and secondary sources. Frequent engagement with these sources enables the students to become discerning and thoughtful readers. Students will also use art, architecture, and literature to help them deepen their understanding of the civilizations being studied. Over the course of the year, students will have the opportunity to conduct independent research. Grade 5 History enables students to think about how the past informs the world in which they live. Students will think about how historical actors responded to the events they experienced and consider how those experiences might mirror events in their own lives. Grade 5 History provides students with the tools to think, write, and speak with confidence, accuracy, and compassion.

Learning Center 5 (meets 3 or 5 times over a 7 day cycle)
The Learning Center is designed to assist students as they work to develop reading skills, a more sophisticated vocabulary, writing skills, study skills, and/or a deeper understanding of mathematics, in order to help them reach their academic potential. Students are taught learning strategies that promote the acquisition, organization, retention, and communication of what they are studying in their core academic courses. They learn how to apply these skills to homework, class discussions, writing assignments, and tests. The learning specialists meet with students in small groups, usually of five or fewer. The learning specialists also serve as the coordinators and liaisons with teachers, parents, and outside support services.

Math 5 (meets 5 times over a 7 day cycle)
The fifth grade course reinforces the study of whole numbers and concentrates in depth on fractions, decimals, and number theory. The focus is on understanding concepts as well as developing a facility with computation, including estimation and mental math. In addition, the course stresses problem-solving, logical reasoning, basic probability, measurement, and geometry, including perimeter and area.

Orchestra 5 (meets 3 times over a 7 day cycle)
Students in the fifth grade orchestra continue to build musical and technical skill on violin, viola, cello or bass. In strings class we use scales, exercises and carefully chosen repertoire that facilitates work on sound production, intonation and reading. Larger ensemble rehearsals encourage students to learn how to listen to others, follow the cues of the conductor and pay attention to all nuances of group playing. At the end of this year, students will be able to play music that is level II according to New York State Music Association guidelines. Students take part in two concerts a year. There are four extra early morning rehearsals before the concert.

Physical Education & Fitness 5 (meets 5 times over a 7 day cycle)
The physical education & fitness program emphasizes the refinement of motor skills and their application to team and individual sports. Fitness is integrated throughout the general curriculum and is a major focus of all sports units. The curriculum provides students with opportunities through sequential instruction and game experiences. Basic sports skills and game rules are introduced and reinforced. Concepts such as cooperation, team effort and good sportsmanship are integrated into daily lessons.

The students rotate through the following sport activity units: badminton, baseball, basketball, lacrosse, soccer, softball, swimming, track & field, volleyball and wrestling. A personal best fitness test is administered three
times each school year. The fitness challenges include a mile run (cardiovascular endurance), sit and reach (flexibility), sit-ups (abdominal strength) and pull-ups or the flexed arm hang (upper body strength).

**Religion 5** (meets 2 times over a 7 day cycle)
Introduction to World Religions is a course designed to help students develop religious literacy; an important skill in this diverse city and school. It introduces students to five major world religious traditions: Hinduism, Buddhism Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Students learn to look for the sacred in each one through the study of text, traditions, stories, exemplars and space. From the simplicity of a Buddhist monastery to the splendor of the Blue Mosque in Istanbul, students virtually visit important sites in each tradition all over the world!

**Science 5** (meets 5 times over a 7 day cycle)
Integrated Science: Through highly relevant natural, familiar, and accessible contexts, students explore within the framework of structured inquiry to develop and use key concepts of both physical and biological science. Units such as Forces and Motion, Properties of Matter, Human Body Systems are the focus of the curriculum, allowing students to grapple with foundational concepts and building their grasp of the processes of and habits of a scientist. Expanding on themes introduced in lower school, students examine interactions between energy and matter. Students develop their understanding of the scientific process through experimentation and exploration-based activities that allow them to investigate, hypothesize, work cooperatively, analyze and compare results, reach conclusions, and use their natural curiosity. Students also explore how central concepts such as phase change, density, energy, force, motion, and the connection between structure and function apply to everyday situations as they learn to appreciate the connections between science and the world around them.

**Sculpture 5** (meets 3 times over a 7 day cycle)
In this class, students will develop a sculpture that incorporates a part of their bodies. How this will be done is completely open. As a result, this course builds on skills learned in previous art classes. In addition, students will be expected to consider and plan how to develop the project, to experiment with materials, and to be flexible in resolving unforeseen problems. Planning and basic engineering are important parts of this project. In this class, it is hoped that students will work with greater independence than in previous years. Students are encouraged to share their expertise with each other and to cooperate using tools and materials.

**Spanish 5** (meets 5 times over a 7 day cycle)
In 5th grade Spanish, the goal is for students to build upon their growing vocabulary and increase their fluency. They improve their listening and speaking skills, write increasingly complex sentences, and communicate as frequently as possible in the target language. Students study vocabulary and grammar which allow them to talk about their life at home and at school, as well as take part in common interactions that occur on a daily basis. They learn to describe friends, family, and classes in the target language. Students study the present tense of regular and some irregular verbs. They are exposed to the numerous cultures of the Spanish speaking world, and they develop a better understanding of the unique differences that exist between them. Video clips, songs, poems, games, and interactive websites are used to further the students' understanding and interest in the language and culture. Students use the textbook and workbook from ¡Así se dice! 1A.

**Studio Art 5** (meets 3 times over a 7 day cycle)
Working in drawing, painting, printmaking and/or collage, students will make work for inclusion in the set of the annual 5th and 6th grade musical. Students will often study works of an important Twentieth Century artist. If time permits, the works studied may inspire additional projects aimed at exploring particular aspects of fine arts practice. All projects will be designed to encourage students to explore the expressive potential of various approaches to art making.
**Study and Technology Skills** (meets 1 time over a 7 day cycle)
In collaboration with the fifth grade team, lessons are designed to enable students to gain the skills that they will need to succeed in the middle school. The goals of the course are to equip students with a range of strategies that they can employ as they complete academic tasks and for students to learn to independently apply these strategies consistently and confidently. The following skills will be addressed during the course: executive functioning (planning, time management, organization, and prioritizing), utilizing the available technology resources, test-taking strategies, decision-making, and self-advocacy.

**Woodwind and Brass Instrument 5** (meets 3 times over a 7 day cycle)
Students in the fifth grade band play trumpet, trombone, saxophone and clarinet, and build on their musical experience in fourth grade band. Band class uses exercises and repertoire that facilitate work on sound production, intonation and reading. Larger ensemble rehearsals allow students to learn how to listen to others, follow the cues of the conductor and pay attention to all nuances of group playing. At the end of this year, students will be able to play music that is level II according to New York State Music Association guidelines. Students take part in two concerts a year. There are four extra early morning rehearsals before each concert.
Grade 6 Course Descriptions

**Ceramics 6** (meets 3 times over a 7 day cycle)
Students work in clay, focusing on various methods of hand building. The goal is to advance beyond the skill level achieved in the Lower School and to deal with interactive imagery and subject matter. The work of professional artists is studied and incorporated into projects. Students look at the pottery of other cultures and include these influences in their work. For students who are experiencing ceramics for the first time, the basic step-by-step process is an important ingredient.

**Chorus 6** (meets 3 times over a 7 day cycle)
Part-singing and sight reading are taught at a more advanced level. The ensemble performs at the winter and spring concerts, as well as special events such as the Interschool Festival in the spring, schedule permitting. Repertoire is diverse, focusing on both western and multicultural themes.

**Digital and Research Skills** (meets 1 time over a 7 day cycle)
In Digital Research and Skills, students will learn to access and consume information through the use of technology and a critical, research-based lens. This course merges the technological topics of digital identity/citizenship, Google Drive, and internet functionality with information literacy topics such as researching with credible sources, creating citations, and utilizing the library/online resources. Students will become well-rounded digital citizens, developing a relationship with research and the internet which builds the confidence they need to approach current and future learning both in and out of the classroom.

**English 6** (meets 5 times over a 7 day cycle)
The grade 6 English curriculum seeks to build writing skills, an appreciation of literature, and an increased understanding and awareness of the scope and structure of spoken and written language. Students write a variety of stories, expository paragraphs and essays, personal essays, and poetry based on the mythology, novels, short stories and poetry read in class. Grammar study and writing workshops are integral aspects of grade 6 English; we review the topics covered in grade 5 and focus especially on sentence elements, phrases and clauses (including a study of transitive and intransitive verbs and direct and indirect objects). The literature used in English 6 becomes increasingly sophisticated throughout the year, and students learn to address such concepts as setting, conflict, theme, character development and tone. Students are also required to complete reading assignments beyond course reading, which provides them with the opportunity to apply the academic skills they have acquired.

**French 6** (meets 5 times over a 7 day cycle)
In 6th grade French, students work on improving their vocabulary and fluency. Greater focus is put on writing longer and more complex paragraphs in French (letters, journal entries, ads, menus, etc.). Students continue to study vocabulary and grammatical structures to facilitate interactions with their peers, using mainly the target language. They learn two new tenses (past tense and near future) and the imperative mode which enable them to talk about past and future events as well as give and understand directions and advice. The topics covered include: school life, weather, food, free time, leisure activities and shopping. We continue our exploration of the French-speaking world and culture as we look more specifically at the northwestern region of France and Senegal. Videos, songs, poems, games, and interactive websites are used to further the students' understanding and interest in the language and culture. Students use the textbook and workbooks (Cahier d’activités et Cahier de vocabulaire et de Grammaire) from Bien Dit 1 (Chapters 4 to 6 and beginning of chapter 7).
Health 6 (meets 1 time over a 7 day cycle)
Students meet in homeroom groups to discuss issues related to pre-adolescence. The first unit, “Awareness to Action,” focuses on issues related to diversity, identity, social justice and activism. The first unit is taught by the MS Health Curriculum Coordinator, Middle School Psychologist, Director of Diversity and faculty. The second unit reviews and introduces topics related to alcohol and other drug use prevention (including tobacco) and the third unit centers around puberty and reproduction. The second and third units are taught by the MS Health Curriculum Coordinator and Middle School Psychologist.

History 6 (meets 5 times over a 7 day cycle)
The Grade 6 History course continues the introduction to historical study that started in the Grade 5 history course. Through a study of the history of the Ancient West, students continue to develop their ability to read a textbook, to take reading and class notes, and to prepare for and complete in-class assessments. Students in Grade 6 History will investigate the roots of Western Civilization through the study of Mesopotamia, the Early Hebrews, Ancient Greece, and Ancient Rome. Students will investigate art, literature, architecture, and religion to deepen their understanding of the areas and people being studied. Students will develop their critical thinking, writing, and speaking skills by completing expository and creative works and by preparing for debates and presentations. Over the course of the year, students will also have the opportunity to conduct independent research. Grade 6 History introduces students to the political, social, economic, cultural, and religious foundations of the world in which they live.

Learning Center 6 (meets 3 or 5 times over a 7 day cycle)
The Learning Center is designed to assist students as they work to develop reading skills, a more sophisticated vocabulary, writing skills, study skills, and/or a deeper understanding of mathematics, in order to help them reach their academic potential. Students are taught learning strategies that promote the acquisition, organization, retention, and communication of what they are studying in their core academic courses. They learn how to apply these skills to homework, class discussions, writing assignments, and tests. The learning specialists meet with students in small groups, usually of five or fewer. The learning specialists also serve as the coordinators and liaisons with teachers, parents, and outside support services.

Math 6 (meets 5 times over a 7 day cycle)
The sixth grade course emphasizes logical reasoning, problem solving, and facility with computation. Topics covered include integers, number theory, fractions, decimals, ratios, percent, equations, and coordinate graphing. The concepts of perimeter, area, circumference, and angle relationships are also extended. Students are encouraged to develop an awareness of the nature and structure of mathematics in a broad context and to enrich their critical thinking skills through real world applications.

Orchestra 6 (meets 3 times over a 7 day cycle)
Students in the sixth grade orchestra continue to build musical and technical skill on violin, viola, cello or bass. In strings class we use scales, exercises and carefully chosen repertoire that facilitates work on sound production, intonation and reading. Larger ensemble rehearsals encourage students to learn how to listen to others, follow the cues of the conductor and pay attention to all nuances of group playing. At the end of this year, students will be able to play music that is level II-III according to New York State Music Association guidelines. Students take part in two concerts a year. There are four extra early morning rehearsals before the concert.

Physical Education & Fitness 6 (meets 5 times over a 7 day cycle)
The Physical Education & Fitness program emphasizes the refinement of motor skills and their application to team and individual sports. Fitness is integrated throughout the general curriculum and is a major focus of all
sports units. The curriculum provides students with opportunities through sequential instruction and game experiences. Basic sports skills and game rules are introduced and reinforced. Concepts such as cooperation, team effort and good sportsmanship are integrated into daily lessons.

The students rotate through the following sport activity units: baseball, basketball, lacrosse, soccer, softball, swimming, track & field, volleyball and wrestling. Students can choose sports in the spring semester to get them playing more in the sports they are most interested in as preparation for their Middle School teams.

A personal best fitness test is administered three times each school year. Students participate in four challenges; students' progress is monitored and discussed as overall fitness is critical to growth as healthy, fitness conscious young adult. The fitness challenges include; mile run (cardiovascular endurance), sit and reach (flexibility), sit ups (abdominal strength) and pull ups/flexed arm hang (upper body strength).

**Religion 6** (meets 2 times over a 7 day cycle)
Religion 6 is an introduction to the ethics of world religions building on the general introduction of the fifth grade curriculum. Each unit focuses on one ethic in one of the religious traditions such as ahimsa (non-violence) in Hinduism or covenant in Judaism. Students learn to use many different sources to approach ethical questions: sacred text, traditional practice, the example of notable people within the tradition as well as elders and friends. Each unit also includes an experiment where the students “try on” a particular ethic and write up their results. Through readings, writing assignments and class discussions, students learn to articulate the ethics that guide their own lives and the effect of those ethics on our school, our city and our world.

**Science 6** (meets 5 times over a 7 day cycle)
Earth and Space Science: The sixth grade year of science explores what makes our home – Earth – unique in our solar system. Through critical reading, writing, and hands-on manipulation of models, students explore the earth's energy, hydrosphere, atmosphere, and geosphere against the backdrop of other planetary bodies. Building upon fifth grade physical science concepts, students work collaboratively to develop hypotheses, identify and select variables, gather data, analyze patterns, and support their conclusions about concepts of force, motion, and density on Earth and in space. During the annual capstone trip to Buehler Space and Science Center, sixth grade students take a simulated mission trip to the moon which delves into questions of life in space and bridges/lays the foundations into the seventh grade year of life sciences. Finally, students develop their ability to construct meaningful arguments with real world high stakes applications based on the work of the Earthquake Retrofit Technologies Project.

**Sculpture 6** (meets 2 times over a 7 day cycle)
In this class, students will develop a sculpture that incorporates a part of their bodies. How this will be done is completely open. As a result, this course builds on skills learned in previous art classes. In addition, students will be expected to consider and plan how to develop the project, to experiment with materials, and to be flexible in resolving unforeseen problems. Planning and basic engineering are important parts of this project. In this class, it is hoped that students will work with greater independence than in previous years. They are encouraged to share their expertise with each other and to cooperate using tools and materials.

**Spanish 6** (meets 4 times over a 7 day cycle)
In 6th grade Spanish, students continue to work on improving their vocabulary and fluency. There is greater emphasis placed on writing at this stage, as students develop more detailed paragraphs, letters, journals, etc. They continue to improve their listening and speaking skills and are encouraged to communicate even more frequently in Spanish. Students review the major concepts learned in 5th grade as they use previously learned grammar and vocabulary in their daily interactions. Building upon this knowledge, new 6th grade topics include:
what and where we eat, popular sports, health, and vacations. In addition, students learn to conjugate verbs in the past tense, including regular and some irregular verbs. They are exposed to different customs and traditions that permeate the Spanish speaking world, and learn to appreciate their differences. Video clips, songs, poems, games, and interactive websites are used to further the students' understanding and interest in the language and culture. Students use the textbook and workbook from ¡Así se dice! 1B.

**Studio Art 6 (meets 2 times over a 7 day cycle)**

Working in drawing, painting, printmaking and/or collage, students will make work for inclusion in the set of the annual 5th and 6th grade musical. Students will often study works of an important Twentieth Century artist. If time permits, the works studied may inspire additional projects aimed at exploring particular aspects of fine arts practice. All projects will be designed to encourage students to explore the expressive potential of various approaches to art making.

**Woodwind and Brass Instrument 6 (meets 3 times over a 7 day cycle)**

Students in the sixth grade band play trumpet, trombone, saxophone, clarinet and other instruments as approved by instructor. Sixth graders will build on their experience in fifth grade band, and continue to develop musical and technical skills. Band class uses exercises and repertoire that facilitate work on sound production, intonation and reading. Larger ensemble rehearsals allow students to learn how to listen to others, follow the cues of the conductor and pay attention to all nuances of group playing. At the end of this year, students will be able to play music that is level II-III according to New York State Music Association guidelines. Students take part in two concerts a year. There are four extra early morning rehearsals before each concert.
Grade 7 Course Descriptions

**Animation 7/8** (meets 4 times over a 7 day cycle)
Students will be introduced to the basic techniques of digital animation through a series of assignments and hands on classroom experience. These projects will include individual projects as well as collaborative work. By studying the work of historical and contemporary animations, as well as the work of their fellow classmates, students will better understand the expressive possibilities of animation in the digital age and develop their own unique vision. The class will consist of demonstrations, hands-on experimentation, and critique. Projects and instruction will further student’s exploration of animation approaches and techniques. With greater control and understanding of the language of this unique medium, students will create animations expressing their personal ideas and interests for all to share.

**Ceramics 7/8** (meets 4 times over a 7 day cycle)
Students in Grades 7/8 Ceramics classes will be developing their skills and experimenting with various forming methods including slab-building, coiling and the use of molds to create both functional and non-functional pieces. The class is open to students who have no experience working with clay as well as more advanced students. We will be working with both stoneware and porcelain clay bodies and the pieces will be fired to a high firing temperature. We will explore a number of surface decorating techniques such as sgraffito, slip trailing, incising and faceting as well as glazing methods. A look at ceramics from a variety of cultures and artists around the world will influence many of the projects.

**Chorus 7/8** (meets 4 times over a 7 day cycle)
The seventh and eighth grade chorus is a co-educational group that performs in the Middle School concerts and occasional chapels or assemblies. The focus is on developing vocal techniques and performance skills. Students learn a broad variety of age-appropriate repertoire.

**Dance, Theatre and Media** (meets 4 times over a 7 day cycle)
In this class the focus will begin with learning the basics of dance technique. Over the course of the semester we’ll work with multiple styles of dance including Jazz, Musical Theatre, Rhythm, Latin & Hip-Hop. Within these styles we’ll explore the influence of dance on theatrical performance, popular culture and our social narrative. The final project will involve incorporating student choreography into a theatrical or media-based project presentation.

**Digital Photography 7/8** (meets 4 times over a 7 day cycle)
Students are introduced to the basic techniques of digital photography and Adobe Photoshop through a series of photographic assignments and hands on classroom experience. Students are encouraged to examine and explore the world around them and develop a greater understanding of how we all fit in it. By documenting their personal lives and their surroundings, students will create their own visual histories while discovering new ideas and the power of self-expression. By studying the work of historical and contemporary photographers, as well as their fellow classmates, students will better understand the expressive possibilities of photography in the digital age and develop their own unique vision. With greater control and understanding of the photographic language, students will create images expressing their personal ideas and interests for all to share.

**Drawing & Mixed Media 7/8** (meets 4 times over a 7 day cycle)
The first half of the semester will be devoted to learning drawing techniques with an emphasis on describing objects from observation. Students will be introduced to the theory of "drawing from the right side of the brain" to access new ways to "see" and divide space and objects into parts so that they can be drawn more easily.
Through a process of practice and discovery, students will explore modeling light and shade with values, contour drawing, and perspective drawing. Through various studies and exercises, students will learn the basic proportions of the human face and body, and how to use a grid to build the framework for a drawing or to enlarge an image. Artists will have the opportunity to explore varied media including pencil, pen, graphite stick, charcoal, Conte crayons, pastels, tonal paper, blending stumps, and various erasers.

In the mixed-media unit, students will be encouraged to use their own drawings as well as any other visual materials that inspire them to create layered artwork in many forms. Students will assemble multi-layered creations, mixing traditional media (such as paint, pastel, pencil) with found objects and images (paper, fabric, text, photos, ribbon, metal, plastic). Texture, shape, color, positive and negative space, and composition will be touchstones of our discussions as students construct their unique mixed media artworks. In addition, the works of masterful mixed-media artists will be discussed and studied throughout the second part of the semester. Everyone will be urged to experiment and discover the unlimited possibilities that arise during the process of making layered artwork.

**Drawing & Painting 7/8** (meets 4 times over a 7 day cycle)
The first half of the semester will be devoted to learning drawing techniques with an emphasis on describing objects from observation. Students will be introduced to the theory of "drawing from the right side of the brain" to access new ways to "see" and divide space and objects into parts so that they can be drawn more easily. Through a process of practice and discovery, students will explore modeling light and shade with values, contour drawing, and perspective drawing. Through various studies and exercises, students will learn the basic proportions of the human face and body, and how to use a grid to build the framework for a drawing or to enlarge an image. Artists will have the opportunity to explore varied media including pencil, pen, graphite stick, charcoal, Conte crayons, pastels, tonal paper, blending stumps, and various erasers.

The painting unit will begin with an introduction to basic techniques in watercolor and acrylic painting. Students will learn to blend color values and will create extensive color scales to prepare them for larger painting projects. They will learn techniques for depicting form and volume and for creating texture. In addition, the class will include studies in art history and students will work on pieces inspired by a renowned artist. Through other varied projects, artists will learn how to develop solid under paintings from their drawings or from observation. Progressive assignments will help develop each student’s confidence and skills. Discussions will enhance artists’ knowledge and visual perception while developing their abilities to verbalize ideas about images and artistic processes.

**English 7** (meets 5 times over a 7 day cycle)
This course continues to develop critical thinking and writing skills while nurturing students' passion for engaging texts and the world around them. Students read a wide range of literature, including poetry, short stories, and novels; they are also introduced to Shakespeare through a study of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*. Students are encouraged to read closely, interpret nuances in literature, and pursue their insights through discussion and through various projects. Writing exercises include a range of creative prompts and genres along with reflections on personal experience, quote analyses, and analytical essays. When responding to literature, students learn to craft, support, and explore their own theses. In addition, dramatic performances and presentations enhance their experience of literature and self-expression. Vocabulary and grammar study are integral and ongoing components of the curriculum as well. The seventh grade grammar curriculum builds on the work of previous years and consists mainly of recognizing and correcting usage errors (such as run-on sentences and sentence fragments) and identifying sentence components (subjects, predicates and their various parts). Fostering important skills through these various forms of study, English 7 aims to inspire students to reflect on literature and lived experience and to express their ideas with confidence.
French 7 (meets 5 times over a 7 day cycle)
7th grade French reinforces previously learned lexical, grammatical and cultural material. While much emphasis is placed on spoken language, students also write more frequently in the target language. Creative projects showcase the students’ writing and speaking skills, such as a team-produced PowerPoint presentation that also fosters collaborative work in the language. New vocabulary draws upon the topics of chores, travel, family, holiday celebrations, food and the home. Grammatical acquisitions include present and past of all categories of verbs, asking questions by inversion, prepositions with countries and cities, double object (direct and indirect) pronouns in the same sentence, negative expressions, and the pronouns y and en. Video clips, songs, films, games, and interactive websites enhance communication skills and build cultural awareness of the francophone world. The textbooks used are Bien dit! level 1 (chapters 8-10) and Bien dit! level 2 (chapters 1-3), and the corresponding workbooks Cahier d’activités and Cahier de vocabulaire et grammaire for each level.

Guitar 1/Beginner Level (meets 4 times over a 7 day cycle)
This course is open to students who are interested in learning to play the guitar at the beginner level. The class will study a variety of guitar styles and develop a small repertoire of folk, blues and rock songs. Students will learn essential chord forms and basic techniques, including strumming with a pick and introductory finger style playing, as well as rudimentary scale study and beginning soloing skills. In addition, the class will include an introduction to the basic elements of music theory and reading standard music notation.

Guitar 2/Intermediate Level (meets 4 times over a 7 day cycle)
This course is a continuation of Guitar 1. The course combines technical guitar playing instruction and participation in a performance ensemble. Students are expected to have successfully completed Guitar 1/Beginner Level or pass a skills equivalency exam. Some home practice is required for preparation of performance pieces.

Health 7 (meets 1 time over a 7 day cycle)
The goal of the health program is to provide information and foster discussions around the many issues that arise during adolescence. In seventh grade, students learn about and review topics such as anatomy, internet safety, stress management and the media. Gender and gender identity are also discussed in the context of equal rights. In addition, we discuss decision making as it relates to human sexuality, intimacy, healthy relationships, and substance use prevention. The classes are taught in small discussion groups led by the MS Health Curriculum Coordinator.

History 7 (meets 5 times over a 7 day cycle)
Seventh grade history focuses on the history of the Americas from the pre-Columbian era to the Civil War. Students will learn about America’s pre-contact indigenous populations and then learn about the effects of contact. The course will also focus on the history of the Native Americans before the arrival of the colonists. The course will continue with a study of the colonial period, the American Revolution, the Constitution and the development of the American political system. The course will end with a study of the Civil War. In addition to working with a textbook, students will develop skills in essay writing and analytical thinking through the study and discussion of primary documents, political cartoons, images of America in paintings and photographs, documentary films, and other media. Students will visit sites relevant to the history they are studying during a grade trip to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Students will be encouraged to draw connections between the past and the present through the examination of current events.

Jazz Band 7/8 (meets 4 times over a 7 day cycle)
The seventh and eighth grade jazz band course is open students who play saxophone, flute, clarinet, trumpet, trombone, baritone horn, drums, piano, bass and guitar. Students who have successfully participated in the
sixth-grade band do not need to audition unless they intend to play piano, bass, drums or guitar. Students learn the basics of jazz theory and improvisation technique. The ensemble performs at Middle School concerts and at the Evening of Jazz in May.

**Latin 7** (meets 5 times over a 7 day cycle)
In Latin 7, students continue their study of Latin grammar and Roman culture. They are introduced to the passive voice in all four verb conjugations and the pluperfect and future perfect tenses. The concept of transitive and intransitive verbs is emphasized, allowing students to gain greater proficiency in their readings. As they become familiar with the 3rd, 4th, and 5th declensions, students learn many new uses of noun cases in addition to those learned in Latin 6. Other elements of the curriculum include demonstratives, relative and interrogative pronouns, participles, and the sequence of tenses. Grammar lessons are woven into readings about Roman literature and culture, highlighting aspects of the curriculum that tie in with other academic disciplines.

**Learning Center 7** (meets 5 times over a 7 day cycle)
The Learning Center is designed to assist students as they work to develop reading skills, a more sophisticated vocabulary, writing skills, study skills, and/or a deeper understanding of mathematics, in order to help them reach their academic potential. Students are taught learning strategies that promote the acquisition, organization, retention, and communication of what they are studying in their core academic courses. They learn how to apply these skills to homework, class discussions, writing assignments, and tests. The learning specialists meet with students in small groups, usually of five or fewer. The learning specialists also serve as the coordinators and liaisons with teachers, parents, and outside support services.

**Math 7** (meets 5 times over a 7 day cycle)
The seventh grade course serves as a bridge between arithmetic and algebra. Arithmetic skills with fractions, decimals (including scientific notation), ratio, proportions and percent are reinforced in the study of abstract expressions with variables, as well as through the analysis of real-life problems. Students use their computational skills and number sense to discover patterns and to explore algebraic representations of these patterns. Scientific calculators are introduced as needed. Algebra becomes a tool in the solution of equation and word problems. In addition, topics from geometry, including volume and surface area, are extended. The concept of probability is explored using varied examples.

**Math 7 Honors** (meets 5 times over a 7 day cycle)
In addition to the topics covered in Math 7, Math 7 Honors explores operating with radicals, 3D geometry with Pythagorean Theorem, and more advanced probability. Students are expected to deduce many of the concepts throughout the year and are exposed to abstract geometric proofs.

**Physical Education & Fitness 7/8** (meets 5 times over a 7 day cycle)
Students who do not participate in Middle School interscholastic athletics are enrolled in Physical Education & Fitness class. Various sports, group games and fitness concepts are taught, practiced and routinely benchmarked. Students are given opportunities to focus on aspects of their overall fitness through fitness routines, cardiovascular fitness, strength building & training, and flexibility. Along with the fitness emphasis, students have the opportunity to play a variety of games and activities, work with a team and have fun with friends as they remain active.

**Science 7** (meets 5 times over a 7 day cycle)
In the 7th grade Students will begin a two-year study of the living world. Over two years students will be exploring five major themes in Biology: Chemistry of Life, Cell Structure and Function, Genetics, Evolution, and Ecology. In the 7th grade students will move through the Chemistry of Life Unit, Cell Structure and Function unit
and be introduced to Genetics. To learn key course concepts students will participate in citizen science projects, lab experiments, study and analyze data collected in the field and lab, project-based learning, collaboration, written reflections, and discussions.

**Spanish 7** (meets 5 times over a 7 day cycle)
In seventh grade, students continue to enhance their vocabulary, to expand their base of grammatical structures and to develop their understanding of other cultures as they continue to develop conversational skills. The vocabulary topics covered are personality, conditions and emotions, illnesses, summer and winter activities, celebrations, shopping, traveling, and daily routines. Students practice the present tense of regular and irregular verbs, and they learn the present progressive, the preterite and the imperfect tenses. While emphasis is placed on writing longer paragraphs, poems, letters, journal entries, etc., they also continue to work on reading and comprehension skills. The textbook and workbook are ¡Así se dice! level 2. Video clips, songs, poems, games, skits, and interactive websites are used to further the students’ knowledge of the language and culture.

**String Orchestra 7/8** (meets 4 times over a 7 day cycle)
The seventh and eighth grade string orchestra furthers the technical training for reading and ensemble performance by string players: violin, viola, cello, and bass. The students are expected to play their instruments at an intermediate level. The study of melody and counterpoint is added to the students’ performance skills. The orchestra performs at Middle School evening concerts and other school events.

**Theater Lab 7/8** (meets 4 times over a 7 day cycle)
The 7/8 Theater Lab introduces students to various aspects of Theater Arts while engaging their imagination and harnessing their curiosity. The course curriculum will include: Acting skills, Theater Games, Scene Study, Set building and Playwriting.
Grade 8 Course Descriptions

**Algebra I** (meets 5 times over a 7 day cycle)
In Algebra I, the traditional topics of algebra are studied, including number systems, quadratic equations, polynomials, rational and radical expressions, factoring, linear equations and inequalities in one and two variables, and systems of equations and inequalities. Emphasis is placed on the solution of word problems and the development of problem-solving skills.

**Algebra I Honors** (meets 5 times over a 7 day cycle)
In addition to the topics of Algebra I, this course covers complex numbers, higher degree radicals and solutions and graphs of quadratic equations.

**Animation 7/8** (meets 4 times over a 7 day cycle)
Students will be introduced to the basic techniques of digital animation through a series of assignments and hands on classroom experience. These projects will include individual projects as well as collaborative work. By studying the work of historical and contemporary animations, as well as the work of their fellow classmates, students will better understand the expressive possibilities of animation in the digital age and develop their own unique vision. The class will consist of demonstrations, hands-on experimentation, and critique. Projects and instruction will further student’s exploration of animation approaches and techniques. With greater control and understanding of the language of this unique medium, students will create animations expressing their personal ideas and interests for all to share.

**Ceramics 7/8** (meets 4 times over a 7 day cycle)
Students in Grades 7/8 Ceramics classes will be developing their skills and experimenting with various forming methods including slab-building, coiling and the use of molds to create both functional and non-functional pieces. The class is open to students who have no experience working with clay as well as more advanced students. We will be working with both stoneware and porcelain clay bodies and the pieces will be fired to a high firing temperature. We will explore a number of surface decorating techniques such as sgraffito, slip trailing, incising and faceting as well as glazing methods. A look at ceramics from a variety of cultures and artists around the world will influence many of the projects.

**Chorus 7/8** (meets 4 times over a 7 day cycle)
The seventh and eighth grade chorus is a co-educational group that performs in the Middle School concerts and occasional chapels or assemblies. The focus is on developing vocal techniques and performance skills. Students learn a broad variety of age-appropriate repertoire.

**Dance, Theatre and Media** (meets 4 times over a 7 day cycle)
In this class the focus will begin with learning the basics of dance technique. Over the course of the semester we’ll work with multiple styles of dance including Jazz, Musical Theatre, Rhythm, Latin & Hip-Hop. Within these styles we’ll explore the influence of dance on theatrical performance, popular culture and our social narrative. The final project will involve incorporating student choreography into a theatrical or media-based project presentation.

**Digital Photography 7/8** (meets 4 times over a 7 day cycle)
Students are introduced to the basic techniques of digital photography and Adobe Photoshop through a series of photographic assignments and hands on classroom experience. Students are encouraged to examine and explore the world around them and develop a greater understanding of how we all fit in it. By documenting their
personal lives and their surroundings, students will create their own visual histories while discovering new ideas and the power of self-expression. By studying the work of historical and contemporary photographers, as well as their fellow classmates, students will better understand the expressive possibilities of photography in the digital age and develop their own unique vision. With greater control and understanding of the photographic language, students will create images expressing their personal ideas and interests for all to share.

Drawing & Mixed Media 7/8 (meets 4 times over a 7 day cycle)
The first half of the semester will be devoted to learning drawing techniques with an emphasis on describing objects from observation. Students will be introduced to the theory of "drawing from the right side of the brain" to access new ways to "see" and divide space and objects into parts so that they can be drawn more easily. Through a process of practice and discovery, students will explore modeling light and shade with values, contour drawing, and perspective drawing. Through various studies and exercises, students will learn the basic proportions of the human face and body, and how to use a grid to build the framework for a drawing or to enlarge an image. Artists will have the opportunity to explore varied media including pencil, pen, graphite stick, charcoal, Conte crayons, pastels, tonal paper, blending stumps, and various erasers.

In the mixed-media unit, students will be encouraged to use their own drawings as well as any other visual materials that inspire them to create layered artwork in many forms. Students will assemble multi-layered creations, mixing traditional media (such as paint, pastel, pencil) with found objects and images (paper, fabric, text, photos, ribbon, metal, plastic). Texture, shape, color, positive and negative space, and composition will be touchstones of our discussions as students construct their unique mixed media artworks. In addition, the works of masterful mixed-media artists will be discussed and studied throughout the second part of the semester. Everyone will be urged to experiment and discover the unlimited possibilities that arise during the process of making layered artwork.

Drawing & Painting 7/8 (meets 4 times over a 7 day cycle)
The first half of the semester will be devoted to learning drawing techniques with an emphasis on describing objects from observation. Students will be introduced to the theory of "drawing from the right side of the brain" to access new ways to "see" and divide space and objects into parts so that they can be drawn more easily. Through a process of practice and discovery, students will explore modeling light and shade with values, contour drawing, and perspective drawing. Through various studies and exercises, students will learn the basic proportions of the human face and body, and how to use a grid to build the framework for a drawing or to enlarge an image. Artists will have the opportunity to explore varied media including pencil, pen, graphite stick, charcoal, Conte crayons, pastels, tonal paper, blending stumps, and various erasers.

The painting unit will begin with an introduction to basic techniques in watercolor and acrylic painting. Students will learn to blend color values and will create extensive color scales to prepare them for larger painting projects. They will learn techniques for depicting form and volume and for creating texture. In addition, the class will include studies in art history and students will work on pieces inspired by a renowned artist. Through other varied projects, artists will learn how to develop solid under paintings from their drawings or from observation. Progressive assignments will help develop each student’s confidence and skills. Discussions will enhance artists’ knowledge and visual perception while developing their abilities to verbalize ideas about images and artistic processes.

English 8 (meets 5 times over a 7 day cycle)
This course seeks to build on the foundations laid in previous years through continued development of students’ reading, analytical thinking and writing skills. Students read a wide range of literature, including novels, short stories, plays, poems and memoirs, addressing them with increased attention to the subtlety of language and
the use of themes and imagery. Student assessments likewise come in a variety of forms, including homework assignments, quizzes, tests, performances, presentations and essays. While an emphasis is placed on the analytical essay, students also regularly engage in creative and personal writing exercises. In addition, grammar and vocabulary study are integral parts of the eighth grade curriculum. The English 8 grammar curriculum reviews concepts covered in 7th grade and earlier and focuses mainly on sentence elements, with a particular emphasis on understanding the nuances of phrases (verb phrases and verbs, gerunds and gerund phrases, infinitives and infinitive phrases and participial phrases). Ultimately, as the culmination of the MS English program, this course is intended to foster a continuing love of both reading and writing while pushing students to achieve a greater depth of understanding about the nature of literature, as well as their own ability to effectively express their ideas and insights.

French 8 (meets 5 times over a 7 day cycle)
8th grade French strengthens and augments the knowledge base of French 7 with even greater emphasis placed on writing in the target language and reading extensive texts. New grammatical acquisitions include the imperfect, future and conditional tenses, the reflexive verbs in present and past tense, the comparative and superlative with adjectives, the relative pronouns ‘qui’ and ‘que’, and the personal pronouns. New vocabulary focuses on school, childhood activities, nature and healthy living, books, movies and vacations. Journal entries are regularly submitted for a letter grade. Primary and secondary sources in French, video clips, songs, games, and interactive websites reinforce the grammatical, lexical and cultural acquisitions. The class undertakes the reading of a short story, and possibly a long-term project encompassing writing and research in French. The textbook used is Bien dit! level 2 (chapters 4-10), and the corresponding workbooks Cahier d’activités and Cahier de vocabulaire et grammaire.

Guitar 1/Beginner Level (meets 4 times over a 7 day cycle)
This course is open to students who are interested in learning to play the guitar at the beginner level. The class will study a variety of guitar styles and develop a small repertoire of folk, blues and rock songs. Students will learn essential chord forms and basic techniques, including strumming with a pick and introductory finger style playing, as well as rudimentary scale study and beginning soloing skills. In addition, the class will include an introduction to the basic elements of music theory and reading standard music notation.

Guitar 2/Intermediate Level (meets 4 times over a 7 day cycle)
This course is a continuation of Guitar 1. The course combines technical guitar playing instruction and participation in a performance ensemble. Students are expected to have successfully completed Guitar 1/Beginner Level or pass a skills equivalency exam. Some home practice is required for preparation of performance pieces.

Health 8 (meets 1 time over a 7 day cycle)
The goal of the health program is to provide information and foster discussions around the many issues that arise during adolescence. In eighth grade, students learn about and review topics such as anatomy, sexually transmitted infections and contraception. Sexual orientation is also discussed in the context of equal rights. In addition, we discuss decision making as it relates to intimacy, healthy relationships, substance use prevention and the transition to 9th grade. The classes are taught in small discussion groups led by the MS Health Curriculum Coordinator, Middle School Psychologist, School Nurse and faculty.

History 8 (meets 5 times over a 7 day cycle)
This course continues the study of American History that started in the seventh grade course. Students study the history of the United States from Reconstruction to the twentieth century. Students investigate the political, social, and economic developments that took place from the mid-nineteenth century through the mid-twentieth
century. The course also explores the effects of the Civil War and Reconstruction on race relations in the United States; students will connect that history to the Civil Rights Movement in the twentieth century. Students will conduct independent research on a topic of their choosing. In addition to working with a textbook, students will develop skills in essay writing and analytical thinking through the study and discussion of primary documents, political cartoons, images of America in paintings and photographs, documentary films, and other media. Students will visit sites related to the history they are studying during a grade trip to Washington, D.C.

**Jazz Band 7/8** (meets 4 times over a 7 day cycle)
The seventh and eighth grade jazz band course is open students who play saxophone, flute, clarinet, trumpet, trombone, baritone horn, drums, piano, bass and guitar. Students who have successfully participated in the sixth-grade band do not need to audition unless they intend to play piano, bass, drums or guitar. Students learn the basics of jazz theory and improvisation technique. The ensemble performs at Middle School concerts and at the Evening of Jazz in May.

**Latin 8** (meets 5 times over a 7 day cycle)
Latin 8 completes the introduction to the basics of Latin and students begin to read small selections of Roman literature. Much of the focus is on the formation and use of the subjunctive mood and more complex grammatical constructions, such as indirect statement. Upon conclusion of the textbook sequence, students engage with works of prose and poetry by important ancient authors.

**Learning Center 8** (meets 5 times over a 7 day cycle)
The Learning Center is designed to assist students as they work to develop reading skills, a more sophisticated vocabulary, writing skills, study skills, and/or a deeper understanding of mathematics, in order to help them reach their academic potential. Students are taught learning strategies that promote the acquisition, organization, and communication of what they are studying in their core academic courses. They learn how to apply these skills to homework, class discussions, writing assignments, and tests. The learning specialists meet with students in small groups, usually of five or fewer. The learning specialists also serve as the coordinators and liaisons with teachers, parents, and outside support services.

**Physical Education & Fitness 7/8** (meets 5 times over a 7 day cycle)
Students who do not participate in Middle School interscholastic athletics are enrolled in Physical Education & Fitness class. Various sports, group games and fitness concepts are taught, practiced and routinely benchmarked. Students are given opportunities to focus on aspects of their overall fitness through fitness routines, cardiovascular fitness, strength building & training, and flexibility. Along with the fitness emphasis, students have the opportunity to play a variety of games and activities, work with a team and have fun with friends as they remain active.

**Science 8** (meets 5 times over a 7 day cycle)
In the 8th grade students will complete their two-year study of the living world by exploring units on Modern Genetics, Evolution and Ecology. To learn key course concepts students will participate in citizen science projects, lab experiments, study and analyze data collected in the field and lab, project-based learning, collaboration, written reflections and discussions.

**Spanish 8** (meets 5 times over a 7 day cycle)
This course reinforces and expands upon the work of Spanish 7. Students in the eighth grade continue to develop oral and written proficiency. They learn to use the imperfect versus the preterite, the future, the conditional, and the present perfect tenses. The vocabulary presented in each chapter focuses on a specific communicative and cultural theme. The topics covered are hobbies, food, time, clothing, shopping, sports, travel
and health. The new vocabulary and grammar enable students to write more complex paragraphs in their journals, and advance on reading and conversation skills. In addition, group activities, including skits, games, songs, and use of interactive websites, give them the opportunity to communicate in Spanish in lifelike situations, and to learn aspects of culture. The textbook and workbook are ¡Así se dice! Level 2.

**String Orchestra 7/8 (meets 4 times over a 7 day cycle)**
The seventh and eighth grade string orchestra furthers the technical training for reading and ensemble performance by string players: violin, viola, cello, and bass. The students are expected to play their instruments at an intermediate level. The study of melody and counterpoint is added to the students’ performance skills. The orchestra performs at Middle School evening concerts and other school events.

**Theater Lab 7/8 (meets 4 times over a 7 day cycle)**
The 7/8 Theater Lab introduces students to various aspects of Theater Arts while engaging their imagination and harnessing their curiosity. The course curriculum will include: Acting skills, Theater Games, Scene Study, Set building and Playwriting.