

# MIDDLE SCHOOL

## Program Highlights 2024-2025

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**G**eared towards students in grades 5-8, the Middle School program focuses on developing skills, knowledge, independence, and self-advocacy. The academic curriculum continues to provide opportunities for hands-on, project-based learning, while students are supported in tackling increasingly rigorous content. Classes are always differentiated to support individual student needs, and opportunities for intensive remediation continue. Increased choice is a crucial part of the program, with students selecting arts and STEM courses, clubs, and extracurricular activities.

In Middle School we celebrate who students are during the exciting period of adolescence. With an understanding of how adolescent brains are becoming more specialized, more effective, and more efficient, we look to provide opportunities for students to develop and solidify skills, as well as dive into areas of passion and explore new and exciting opportunities.

### EACH DAY INCLUDES:

- 40-minute periods for 5th/6th
  - English/Language Arts
  - Mathematics
  - Science
  - Academic Club/History
  - Physical Education
  - 2-3 Electives
- Transition in 7th/8th to 80-minute blocks for
  - English/Language Arts
  - Mathematics
  - Science
  - History
  - 1 Elective class
- Lunch/Recess
- WIN, Social Clubs or Affinity Groups

## ACADEMICS

Class sizes range from 1 to 12 students.

### LITERACY

Directly aligned with the Science of Reading and evidence-based instruction, classrooms utilize the Orton-Gillingham methodology and The Writing Revolution to provide direct instruction in reading and writing. All 5th and 6th graders have an 80-minute daily Literacy block, where diagnostic-prescriptive teaching allows classroom content to be specifically adapted to student skill and need. In 7th and 8th grade, Literacy instruction moves to an English class, focusing on reading comprehension and written expression. For those students who continue to need instruction on the process of reading, daily Reading classes continue the Orton-Gillingham methodology, focusing on reading accuracy and fluency.

### MATHEMATICS

Daily math instruction is provided in a diagnostic and prescriptive format, using a concrete - representational - abstract sequenced framework to guide students toward grade-level standards. Classrooms are created based upon student skill and need, giving us the opportunity to provide the “just right” amount of remediation and rigor, with classes ranging from Foundations to Geometry.

### SCIENCE

Middle School science cycles through Life Science, Earth Science, Biology, and Physical Science using inquiry and project-based learning and guided by the Next Gen Science Standards.



### SOCIAL STUDIES

The Academic Club methodology, Lab's signature immersive humanities programming, continues in the Middle School. 5th and 6th graders join Museum and Reporters club to enjoy hands-on exploration of history, geography, and sociology. In 7th and 8th grade, dynamic small-group experiences continue in Global Citizenship and Democracy classes, with opportunities for immersive simulations and debates.

### TECHNOLOGY

All students utilize technology and media including:

- 1:1 Chromebooks
- Interactive white boards
- Speech-to-Text and Text-to-Speech software
- Applications to support note-taking, organization, homework, etc.



## OUR PROGRAM IS

### Collaborative and Interdisciplinary

- Middle School courses are designed to target key concepts and skills that revolve around common themes.
- Our writing program is used across all content areas to aid with generalization.

### Individualized

- Teachers use both formal and informal assessments to identify how each student learns best and to develop a learning plan to maximize each student's ability to learn and produce quality work.
- Students are encouraged to take ownership of their learning by identifying how they learn best and utilizing the resources surrounding them.

### Accessible

- Technology is integrated into the classroom to help students access the curriculum and produce work that represents their true abilities.
- Content can be provided at varied reading levels and accessed by assistive technology.



## EXECUTIVE SKILLS AND SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

### W.I.N.

Standing for What I Need, WIN is an additional period at the end of the day. Guided by an advisor and with a small group of classmates. WIN provides:

- direct instruction and consistent support for executive function skills
- opportunities for reflection and self-advocacy

### SOCIAL OPPORTUNITIES

Students have many social opportunities such as field days, school dances, ropes courses, and community service projects which enhance social skills and awareness. Our Social Emotional Learning (SEL) and Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEIB) programs, in addition to our partnership with The Social Institute, help our students to develop healthy, successful, and inclusive relationships.





## SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING

The Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) and Restorative Practices program helps students develop the necessary SEL skills to enhance their abilities to meaningfully connect with individuals of diverse perspectives, cultures, languages, experiences and identities, ultimately building healthier, more equitable and inclusive communities.

### BELONGING TIME

“Belonging Time” provides our students with a foundational understanding of the intersections of a person’s identity. Within this understanding, students cultivate a respect for and admiration of the differences among people. “Belonging Time” ensures that each student leaves embracing the multiplicity and fluidity of identity while being instilled with an inviolable self-pride.

During “Belonging Time,” students work with age-level definitions of: diversity, equity, inclusion, belonging, self-love, and identity – discussing identity in the markers of: age, physical ability, appearance, race, sexual orientation, gender, geographic location, family structure, ethnicity, religion, communication style and thinking style. Affinity Groups meet twice per month to give students a dedicated time and space to gather with those who have shared experiences.



### EXPERT CLINICAL SERVICES

- **Integrated Services:** Teachers, artists, speech-language therapists, occupational therapists, psychologists, and social workers work closely together to unlock each student’s potential.
- **Clinical Services:** Individual and small-group sessions in Speech/Language, Occupational Therapy, and Psychological Services are available for an additional fee.



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## CHOICE

We know that giving our students choice enables them to feel ownership of, and motivation for, their learning. Daily electives in the arts, STEM, as well as social clubs give students this important element of choice in their day.

### ELECTIVES

#### Visual Arts

- Digital Art
- Photography
- Studio Art
- Ceramics

#### Performing Arts

- Theater
- Musical Theater
- Band
- Dance

#### STEM

- Robotics & Engineering - Levels 1 & 2
- Videography
- Design Lab

#### Curricular Exploration

- Authors & Illustrators
- American Sign Language
- Yearbook



### SOCIAL CLUBS

Guided by student interest, they can include:

- Art Lounge
- Chess & Board Games
- Cooking
- Dungeons & Dragons
- Karaoke
- Knitting & Crochet
- Student Government
- The Art of Video Games
- Sports

### ATHLETICS

Lab Dragons shine in:

- Archery
- Cross Country
- Fencing
- Soccer
- Track and Field
- Basketball
- Golf
- Kickball
- Tennis
- Volleyball

### TRAVEL

Field trips are tied to curricular themes and take advantage of the many opportunities in the DC, Maryland, and Virginia area. 8th Graders have an Experiential Learning & Travel week, which give students the opportunity to immerse themselves in learning from the environment either in Philadelphia, PA or at the Teton Science School in Jackson Hole, Wyoming.



THE LAB SCHOOL OF WASHINGTON

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