Parker
Francis W. Parker School
Expanding Learning

Middle School
Program of Studies 2019–20
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FROM THE HEAD OF MIDDLE SCHOOL

The Middle School faculty and staff have made intentional, thoughtful plans for every aspect of your child’s education, within and beyond the formal classroom. Our fundamental aim is that our students learn to lead socially useful and personally satisfying lives by teaching them how to reason, investigate, reflect, create, innovate, collaborate, and act responsibly, always leading with empathy, inclusivity, and a desire to contribute to the greater good. And with middle-schoolers, strengthening perseverance, enhancing self-esteem through overcoming challenge, and increasing personal independence and self-advocacy are always on our minds.

Our faculty and staff seek to connect, to know each student so that our interactions—teaching, advising, coaching, and even our behavioral interventions and mentoring—are responsive to the unique needs of that individual…while at the same time helping individuals understand their responsibility to the whole, to their community. Academically, we may not be able to individualize each lesson, but we will think carefully about how to teach in ways that take into account each child’s strengths, passions and interests. We are most successful at this when there is close communication between home and school, not measured by frequency of contact as much as by a shared understanding of the primary growth goals for the child, in the context of early adolescence as a stage of human development. So, please communicate your hopes and insights and we will endeavor to do the same, always with empathy and a growth mindset, but also with candor, truth and trust.

The Middle School years are full of excitement, challenge and exploration. Children undergo tremendous cognitive, physical and social growth. They become increasingly able to handle complex academic concepts and social and abstract levels of understanding, yet still need a great deal of hands-on involvement. As they mature, they will naturally become more independent. An important part of our job is to help them take some risks academically, athletically and socially while also providing a safety net of clear guidelines and caring guidance.

School can and should be joyful. We hope the year will reflect the fact that the child is as the center of all our activities and, therefore, learning in the Middle School should have an element of wonder, discovery, enjoyment and fun. We believe in developing self-esteem through nurturing, through opportunities for cooperation, and through opportunities to participate and be successful in a variety of experiences. We also believe that self-esteem comes though being held accountable and learning from mistakes and failures. It is essential that we sometimes fall down or risk never learning how to get back up.

Elemental to Parker’s progressive mission—and embedded throughout our academic curriculum and in our activities programming—is an honest and thoughtful exploration of the multiple aspects of human identity. We engage in intentional teaching on how all share responsibility for making the Parker community, the nation and the world a more equitable and inclusive place, recognizing, naming and interrupting unintentional or intentional bias. Among the aspects of identity explored in developmentally appropriate ways throughout the middle school years is race, gender identity, gender orientation, class, religion, body shape and other physical differences (illness, physical abilities, food allergies, et al), and the power and privilege/disadvantage dynamics related to these aspects of identity at Parker and in
society. We encourage you to read with your child the “Middle School Conduct Code” that appears in the Parents’ Handbook. It will provide you with an important appreciation of the expectations we have for developing responsible citizenship among our students and a basis from which you can support the meaning and intent of our policies and practices.

As you become familiar with the lists of teachers and advisors you may ask, “Who can best answer my questions and concerns?” Regarding a particular course, please contact the classroom teacher. Should you want to discuss something about grade related matters, County Fair, or class trips, the grade level team leader is the best person to call. The advisor will have the wide-angle view of your child’s experience and is the person who can best share this perspective. Our Dean of Student Life, Tray White, is available to discuss issues related to clubs, activities, class retreats, before and after school, service, and transition periods throughout the day. Our Coordinator Tierra Moore can be called upon to assist with forgotten materials, early dismissals, absences from school and other important day-to-day issues. The Head of the Middle School, John Novick, provides a clearinghouse for unresolved inquiries or recommendations, and conversations about approach and the philosophical underpinnings of our program.

**Helpful hints on who to see in the Middle School**

**The Advisor**

A student’s learning is best supported when there is a good relationship between home and school. To develop such a bond, we maintain a strong, supportive advisory program for Middle School students. Each student in the Middle School is assigned an advisor. The purpose of the advisor is to allow for the close supervision of each student’s progress and to make each student aware that there is at least one person in particular on the faculty who is interested in and knowledgeable about every phase of his or her life.

Advisors serve a number of important functions. They provide informal and personal guidance for students for all areas of school life. They serve as an advocate for students with other members of the faculty and administration. They collect and receive pertinent information from the faculty about their advisees and serve as a liaison for the parent with the school. Students check in with their advisors every morning for attendance and meet with them in groups at least twice a week for longer periods. Advisory groups may discuss an important world event, study strategies, a thought provoking morning-exercise; work though a piece of curriculum such as sex education or Project Alert, or play a game and have a snack. Each advisor is given latitude to use the time in the manner that her/his group most needs.

This informal guidance does not preclude a student forming a close relationship with other faculty, nor does it prohibit parents from dealing directly with the faculty or calling other school staff who might be helpful. It is a program designed to help support students as they learn and grow.

The teachers/advisors in the Middle School are also organized into grade level teams. At weekly meetings the teams plan curriculum, organize themselves for upcoming events and sometimes share insights and wisdom about a group of students or an individual. One teacher on each team is given the
additional responsibility of being the Team Leader. This person can be contacted by parents for general information about specific grade level activities.

Below are the room numbers and school phone numbers for all Middle School Advisors. The Team Leader for each grade is printed in italics.

**Sixth Grade**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Phone</th>
<th>Room</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rob Denien, Music</td>
<td>797-5279</td>
<td>Music Suite (2nd Floor)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George Drury, English</td>
<td>797-5355</td>
<td>Rm. 337</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kathy German, LR</td>
<td>797-5319</td>
<td>Rm. 317</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keedra Gibba, History</td>
<td>797-5356</td>
<td>Rm 338</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nikki Joseph, Spanish</td>
<td>797-5368</td>
<td>Rm. 377</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robin Masters, Math</td>
<td>797-5353</td>
<td>Rm. 334</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suzan Morrison, Spanish</td>
<td>797-5368</td>
<td>Rm. 377</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Peg Zerega, Science</strong></td>
<td>797-5463</td>
<td>Rm. 179</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Seventh Grade**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Phone</th>
<th>Room</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Steven Files, Tech Facilitator</td>
<td>797-5453</td>
<td>Collab Lab (3rd Floor)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angela Miklavcic, Science</td>
<td>797-5411</td>
<td>Rm. 178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheila Rintels, LR</td>
<td>797-5363</td>
<td>Rm.344</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Christopher Stader, Math</strong></td>
<td>797-5354</td>
<td>Rm. 333</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anthony Shaker, History</td>
<td>797-5360</td>
<td>Rm. 346</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kate Tabor, English</td>
<td>797-5362</td>
<td>Rm. 348</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edinson López Flores, Spanish</td>
<td>797-5402</td>
<td>Rm. 350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jasmine Hart (fall)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kara Turpin, PE (spring)</td>
<td>797-5373</td>
<td>Rm. 101-E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tray White, Dean</td>
<td>797-5203</td>
<td>Rm. 318</td>
</tr>
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</table>

**Eighth Grade**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Phone</th>
<th>Room</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Marcie Frasz, Spanish</td>
<td>797-5364</td>
<td>Rm. 349</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anne Marie Fries, Science</td>
<td>797-5416</td>
<td>Rm. 180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>David Fuder, English</strong></td>
<td>797-5361</td>
<td>Rm. 347</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stephanie Lorenzo, History</td>
<td>797-5359</td>
<td>Rm. 345</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timothy O’Connor, Math</td>
<td>797-5325</td>
<td>Rm 343</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Val Ginnan, LR</td>
<td>797-5366</td>
<td>Rm.350-A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kam Woodard, Math</td>
<td>797-5366</td>
<td>Rm. 319</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Middle School Faculty

One of the differences between the Lower and Intermediate Schools (which feature self-contained classrooms) and the Middle School is the faculty in the Middle School are divided into grade-level teams and Grades 6-12 subject-matter departments. Without sacrificing the holistic view of the child which serves the younger grades so well, the Middle School departmental affiliation (combined with team structures) enables us to know each child individually and maintain a strong sense of curricular flow from grades 6 through 12, with subject-matter specialists in every area of study. What follows are departmental groupings for the Middle School faculty. Department Chairs are printed in italics.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>English</strong></th>
<th><strong>Mathematics</strong></th>
<th><strong>Science</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>George Drury, 6&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Robin Masters, 6&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Peg Zerega, 6&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Kate Tabor, 7&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</em></td>
<td>Christopher Stader, 7&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td><em>Angela Miklavcic, 7&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David Fuder, 8&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Tim O’Connor, 8&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Anne Marie Fries, 8&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>World Languages/Cultures</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nikki Joseph, 6&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Keedra Gibba, 6&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suzan Morrison, 6&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td><em>Anthony Shaker, 7&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edinson López Flores, 7&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Stephanie Lorenzo, 8&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marcie Frasz, 8&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Physical Education</strong></td>
<td><strong>Music</strong></td>
<td><strong>Visual Arts</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willie Banks</td>
<td>Rob Denien</td>
<td>Anne Blasko</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terry Davis</td>
<td>Emma Javois</td>
<td>Caroline Gardner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tyler Heidtke</td>
<td>Alec Synakowski</td>
<td>Kay Silva</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pat Pagnucco</td>
<td><em>Kingsley Tang</em></td>
<td>Katie Palmer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virginia Iverson / Kara Turpin</td>
<td></td>
<td>Nick Rupard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Jan Zoufal</em></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>Chris Turner</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Learning Resource (LR)</strong></td>
<td><strong>Counseling</strong></td>
<td><strong>Integrated Learning/</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kathy German, 6&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>Reyna Smith, 6&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; through 8&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td><strong>Information Science (ILIS)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheila Rintels, 7&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td></td>
<td>Adam Colestock, STEM/Coding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Val Ginnan, 8&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td></td>
<td>Steven Files, Tech Facilitator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>Annette Lesak, Library &amp; ILIS</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TIDES Department
TIDES is a Parker school-wide initiative that encompasses our approach to 21st Century progressive education: Technology, Innovation, Design Thinking and Entrepreneurship for Society (or TIDES). Middle school students experience elements of TIDES woven throughout their content areas and extracurricular activities with the ultimate goal of utilizing TIDES tenets for the betterment of society. TIDES work is typically inter-disciplinary, collaborative, creative and problem-solving in nature, often revealing to students exciting levels of complexity and the potential they have for solving real-world problems. Sarah Beebe and Mary Catherine Coleman are TIDES Department Chairs, and they work with a group of faculty and staff across all divisions of the school to plan and implement (or help others implement) TIDES-oriented learning experiences for students. Adam Colestock and Tim O’Connor are Middle School faculty members who are also current TIDES Facilitators.

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Department
It is the work of every student, faculty and staff member, administrator, parent and alum to collaborate with purpose to make Parker “a model home,” an inclusive community in which every member is known, understood, appreciated and valued—with equitable voice and agency, affording all the respect, dignity and safety needed to bring their authentic selves to the community for the greater good. Our school-wide Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Department (Co-Chaired by Kingsley Tang and Kirkland La Rue) works to create opportunities for all faculty and staff to grow their own cultural competency (and to support one another in that process), with an eye toward reflecting on our educational practice and doing our own identity work so that we can, in turn, help students develop the cultural competency skills needed as engaged, successful citizens in the 21st Century. Jenny Lira, Reyna Smith and Phenice Williams are members of this department as our Intermediate & Middle School Diversity Coordinators, and along with Tray White and John Novick, work together as the divisional equity and inclusion team. Equity and inclusion themes and practices are integrated into all subject-matters by our outstanding faculty, while affinity and ally groups in the Middle School (Students of Color, the Pride Alliance, formerly GSA, and La Mesa Hispana) help ensure that all students find mirrors in the community beyond the classroom.

Middle School Assistant Teachers – Adrian Leo- 6th, Jasmine Hart 7th, Patrick Stanton 8th
Assistant Teachers act as instructional assistants to any middle school teacher. They also chaperone class trips, sponsor clubs, sometimes coach athletics, and supervise tutorials and lunch/recess. They support student growth in a variety of ways (including socially) and can function as substitute teachers, as needed. Assistant Teachers are essential to the learning and growth of every middle schooler.

Grades 4-8 coding and STEM teacher - Adam Colestock
Adam works closely with teachers in grades 4-8 to help integrate the use of programming, computational thinking, engineering and design skills into our curricula. He also leads enrichment activities such as Middle School Robotics and Creative Computing Club.

Middle School Technology Facilitator – Steven Files
Steven works closely with teachers in grades 6-8 to support the integration of technology, ILIS and TIDES principles into our curricula. He manages the Middle School Collab Lab and technological
equipment, helps chaperone class trips, and is also involved in a variety of enrichment programs beyond the classroom.

**Intermediate & Middle School Coordinator – Tierra Moore**

Tierra Moore is the person to call for scheduling conferences with Mr. Novick. She is also the one to call when your child is absent. Tierra can be reached at 773-797-5351 or at tmoore@fwparker.org. She can also get important messages to students and faculty during the day, but please give her a reasonable amount of time to do so. Students can see Tierra about any of the following things: lost and found articles, if they are sick or tardy, telephone permission, late arrivals or early dismissals, planned absence forms, and maintenance problems.

**Intermediate & Middle School Dean of Student Life – Tray White**

Tray White organizes and manages student life beyond the classroom for students in grades 4–8. He oversees all non-athletic activities, including clubs, student travel, special events, school service, and student life during key transition periods, including the drop off and pick-up periods, lunch/recess, and after school hours. He also manages the Middle School summer Bridge Program for students new to Parker, recruits and organizes parent volunteers, and serves as the divisional liaison to our Athletic Department. Tray teaches a section of our 8th grade wellness/health program, #specialtopics. Tray is always happy to assist students and parents with questions about these programs.

**Head of the Intermediate & Middle Schools – John Novick**

John Novick is ultimately responsible for overseeing all of the programs and faculty and staff in the Middle School. He is happy to answer any concerns which cannot be answered by an advisor. Mr. Novick meets with teachers of each grade level of the Middle School to discuss matters of curriculum and individual student progress. He would be the person to contact you there is a more serious disciplinary infraction. He is also the person to talk to if you feel your child needs counseling or extra academic support. Please do not hesitate to call him about any questions pertaining to Middle School life. He is always happy to speak to parents and students.

**Middle School Staff and Leadership Teams**

Our divisional staff team includes the Head of the Intermediate & Middle Schools (John Novick), the Intermediate & Middle School Dean of Student Life (Tray White), the Divisional Coordinator (Tierra Moore) and the Technology Facilitator (Steven Files).

Our Middle School Leadership Team includes the Head of the Intermediate & Middle Schools (John Novick), the Intermediate & Middle School Dean of Student Life (Tray White), the 6th Grade Team Leader (Peg Zerega), the 7th Grade Team Leader (Chris Stader), the 8th Grade Team Leader (David Fuder) and the Middle School Counselor (Reyna Smith).
Course Overview

As an IS/MS STEM & Coding Teacher, I work to provide students with exciting opportunities to explore science, engineering, mathematics and technology during the school day and beyond. I work with teachers to incorporate programming and computational thinking into projects throughout the year. My work with students focuses on how to be active, resourceful, and resilient problem solvers and how to use computational tools for inquiry and creative expression. I also run a few STEM-focused clubs that provide students with the time and space to nurture and deepen their interests in a friendly environment with classmates.

Middle School Robotics: In the fall, Parker participates in the FIRST LEGO League’s (FLL) annual competition. In FLL, teams of students work together to build and program an autonomous robot (using the LEGO Mindstorms robot set) to complete challenges and score points on a thematic table-top playing surface. They also work together to develop an innovative solution to a problem that they investigate as part of a design project. Each year a theme is selected that serves as the focus of the challenges that the robot faces and the general topic area for the design project. Students travel to tournaments with their robots to compete against other teams and present their projects to a panel of judges. In addition to exploring the science content related to the theme and learning the engineering principles necessary to build their robots, students also learn how to work together as part of a positive and productive team. More information can be found at: http://www.firstlegoleague.org/. During the second half of the year, Spring Robotics Club also provides an opportunity for kids to work individually or in teams designing and programming robots in a more open-ended project format that will be shared at an end of the year expo event for parents.

Creative Computing Club: Computer programming is a powerful tool for creative expression and learning to code helps to develop problem-solving abilities. Creative Computing Club celebrates tinkering, making, engineering, designing, programming and all of the other ways that computing can help enhance our creative expression. We will learn new skills for different applications of computing through mini-workshops followed by time to work on independent or small group projects. The topics covered may include creating animations or telling stories, game design, music composition, algorithmic art, physical interface design, website design and more. CCC will meet weekly during the Spring and will focus on students working together to develop projects that build off their interests and can be shared with the Community.

Math Olympiad: (Falls under STEM Enrichment but is sponsored by 6th grade math teacher Robin Masters): Math Olympiad is a national program that engages middle school students in a team math competition for the purpose of building enthusiasm for mathematics, teaching major problem solving strategies, and encouraging mathematical creativity. There are a series of five timed exams that take place about once a month during the school year. Each exam lasts about 30 minutes and consists of five challenging math questions designed to test students’ problem-solving prowess. The tests take place during the school day so that any interested student may participate. In addition, students will be provided with other opportunities to practice test questions and to develop the skills that will help them on the exams. Participation in Math Olympiad culminates at the end of the year with a middle school math scavenger hunt. Students follow puzzles and clues all across the school’s campus to find math problems that they must solve as they compete in small teams to see which team will reign supreme. More information about Math Olympiad can be found at: http://www.moems.org.
Middle School Athletics
Grades Six, Seven and Eight

Bobby Starks, Athletic Director
Amber Scott, Assistant Athletic Director
Room 191
Ext. 5160

Athletic Philosophy

Consistent with its philosophy of progressive education and social responsibility, Parker recognizes that participation in athletics can teach invaluable lessons in character and citizenship. When conducted in a manner that promotes healthy, positive participation, athletics can instill positive values in student athletes such as discipline, respect, responsibility, fairness and trustworthiness. One critical element that is essential to a positive athletic experience is the active participation of parents and the Parker community. However, such parental and communal participation must also exhibit respect and good sportsmanship for coaches, officials and opponents.

No-Cut Policy

The Athletics Program is committed to a no-cut policy. This philosophical approach provides all student-athletes an opportunity to participate in interscholastic sports, regardless of their skill or experience. The program is based on a sports curriculum that becomes progressively more challenging as student-athletes move through each grade. To ensure that each student-athlete is getting the appropriate instruction and competition, coaches will consistently evaluate players throughout the season. Playing time will be determined by, but not limited to, the following:

1. Attendance, attitude and effort in practice sessions
2. A willingness to learn, work with others and participate with a high level of sportsmanship
3. Understanding of game-play strategies and the ability to implement them
4. Skills exhibited during practice and athletic competitions

Middle School Athletic Philosophy and Procedures

The Middle School Athletics Program strives to provide student-athletes with the social, emotional and physical benefits of playing sports. As student-athletes progress through the Athletics program, they will:

1. Enhance their skill, technique and knowledge of the game strategy
2. Develop an understanding of team concepts and have the ability to implement them
3. Participate with a high level of sportsmanship and compassion for others
4. Understand the need to sacrifice self-interests for the well-being of the team
5. Make a commitment to the team by being present and fully involved in all practices and games
Sixth Grade

This is the first year that student-athletes can participate in interscholastic sports for Parker. Skill development, team concepts and sportsmanship are the major components of the program. All student-athletes will have the opportunity to play and gain court/field experience. Playing time is not equal and is determined by the Coach through the criteria listed in the Middle School Athletics Policy.

Seventh and Eighth Grades

Student-athletes in these grades will experience more challenging competition and game-play strategies. Though the aim is to provide all student-athletes with an opportunity to play in every competition, this cannot be guaranteed as participation is determined based on the criteria in the Middle School Athletics Policy.
The Middle School Parker Partners Program gives students the opportunity to learn about their community outside of the school setting. The goal for Parker Partners is for Middle School students to move beyond the familiar and to explore new situations and interact with a variety of people with open minds and hearts. Guided by faculty and parent volunteers, each small group will spend several mornings during the year partnering with an agency or working on a project. Students will have the opportunity to learn about each of their sites and interact with the personnel and clients of the organization in meaningful ways. Students will be asked to become listeners, observers, planners, teachers, decision makers, and critical thinkers to support their larger community. Through these responsibilities, students can strengthen their self-esteem, solidify their capacity to feel empathy for others, and deepen their understanding of what it means to be responsible citizens in a democratic society.

Through exposure to the outside community, Parker Partners gives students an engaging cross grade experience that provides agency and realization that their thoughtfulness, actions and work make a difference for others outside the confines of the classroom, and that they, too, can learn and benefit from interacting with others. As such, Parker Partners is a vital part of the Middle School curriculum and all students must be present for every session unless ill. If a student misses a Parker Partners morning, he or she will be asked to stay home for the remainder of the day.

**Parker Partners Dates, 2019-20**

- Wednesday, November 6
- Tuesday, December 3
- Tuesday, February 4
- Thursday, March 5
- Thursday, April 2
- Wednesday, May 6
Overview

Parker students learn to think, create, adapt and invent. Our Integrated Learning and Information Sciences Department (ILIS) curriculum is uniquely structured to enable students to follow interests and pursue passions while making connections between concepts, the classroom and the community. Project-based learning is the foundation of our program. Through this, students engage in research and develop agility in accessing, discerning and applying information. Technology and media is thoughtfully integrated to ignite social awareness and launch their imaginations.

Objectives

ILIS hosts collaborative projects that allow students to engage in experiences that encourage creativity, collaboration, and adaptability. We use the tools of technology, innovation, design thinking and entrepreneurship for society to guide the student experience. We’re passionate about building and facilitating these projects to help students and teachers build connections between departments, grade levels and the community. Working collaboratively with others across grade levels, building mastery year after year, students develop the skills and mindset to impact their school and the world as thinkers, doers and makers.

Highlights

Both the TIDES Garage and Collab Lab are flexible learning spaces outfitted with design and prototyping materials including dry erase walls and tables, 3D printers, laser cutters, sewing machines, laptops, green screens, virtual reality technology, iPads, and more. Students utilize these resources via a number of different content area projects, including the 7th grade identity unit, 6th grade creation myth project, and opportunities open to all middle schoolers like Maker Wednesdays and the Passion Project cycle.

A focus on Design Thinking and Maker Empowerment encourages students to recognize designs and systems in the world around them and to tinker, remake and create. Our staff consists of librarians/media specialists and educational technology experts who work to empower students to not only utilize print and digital research materials, but to also create new knowledge.
Counseling Department
Reyna Smith
Room 349-A
Ext 5367

Counseling Mission

The Counseling Department views each student as a complex learner embedded in multiple and changing contexts. In addition to being learners, students are developing as emotional, social and physical members of a larger community that includes home, school, and society. Because of this variety of contexts and in keeping with the mission of the school, we believe that a developmental approach, built upon a partnership between students, their parents and the school, is essential in our work.

The purpose of the Counseling Department at Parker is to support and help students to succeed and thrive. We use a team approach and work very closely with the Learning Resource Department and teachers. We carry out our mission by developing an understanding of the educational, emotional, social and physical needs of students and by helping faculty, students and parents meet these needs. We believe that every student is capable of learning and relating, and that every student wants to learn and grow. However, sometimes students encounter permanent or temporary circumstances that interfere with their ability to learn or relate. When these conditions are understood and students are provided appropriate support, insight and strategies, they succeed both individually and as part of the larger community. The Counseling Department also exists to help the school, as a whole, become an environment where staff, faculty and students can flourish.

In addition to helping students directly, we believe in educating for prevention. This prevention education includes not only informing students how to help themselves, but also how to assist each other and become concerned and responsible citizens both within the Parker community and in the world outside. Overall, the objectives of the counseling program are closely tied to the mission of the Francis W. Parker School, which aims to “cultivate in its students qualities of character and citizenship that can guide them through life as resourceful, thoughtful and active participants in a democratic society.”

Structure and Principles

Parker’s Counseling Department is divided into four divisions: Lower School, Intermediate School, Middle School and Upper School. Each division includes a counselor that has primary, but not exclusive, responsibilities for that division. Although these divisions serve vastly different age groups, six principles permeate our overall work with students, regardless of age:

1. Crisis prevention through health education and parent education
2. Early identification of individual issues and problems
3. Early intervention once a problem or issue has been diagnosed
4. A collaborative spirit that links and frequently brings together students, parents, teachers, and outside experts and consultants
5. A developmental approach leading to a clear understanding of issues
6. A belief that a “Parker experience” is more than an academic experience, but one that includes both the social and emotional growth of the student.
Services Provided

The Counseling Department provides a wide variety of services to the Parker community. In addition to functioning in the traditional roles of counselors, we also function as educators, coordinators of services, assessors and consultants. We regularly provide the following services:

- Coordinate staffing for individual students
- Consult with teachers and families
- Present and facilitate workshops on parenting and mental health issues
- Counsel individuals—usually on a “short term” basis, but on occasion, in “long term” supportive therapy
- Facilitate self-help and support groups (e.g. new student groups, student of color groups, divorce groups, social skills groups, A.D.H.D. groups)
- Facilitate after school clubs (e.g. gaming club, movie club, study groups)
- Provide drug education and support
- Participate in and help facilitate student retreats
- Coordinate services within the school between teachers, Learning Resource staff and other professionals
- Coordinate services with school officials and outside professionals (e.g. tutors, therapists) when appropriate
- Refer students and families to outside providers
- Provide crisis intervention for individuals and occasionally for the entire school.
As students enter the Middle School, they face new expectations and build upon the strategies and skills learned in the previous grades. The Learning Resource teacher uses the grade level curriculum as a vehicle to introduce new strategies and to promote study skills and self-advocacy. Through collaboration with the grade teams and the students’ advisors, we provide accommodations to students to enhance their participation in the regular classroom setting. Throughout the year, suggestions are offered to classroom teachers for adapting materials. The ultimate goal is to help all students reach their potential and become confident and successful in their studies.

The Middle School Learning Resources Program is comprised mostly of students who were recommended by the Intermediate Learning Resource teachers and grade heads. The grade level team and advisors refer new students to the program. As a team, the teachers, Learning Resource teachers, division head and parents consider the student’s profile and determine the most appropriate level of support. Not all students with a diagnosis of a learning difference benefit from the program and may benefit more from outside remediation. After a diagnostic evaluation, a meeting with the parents and team is scheduled to discuss recommendations. If a student does not have current diagnostic testing, the family is provided with a referral and is guided through the process. Future recommendations may be made for outside support.

The Middle School Learning Resource team consists of one Learning Resource teacher per grade who supports the needs of the students, their families, and faculty. In addition, the Learning Resource teacher serves as a Middle School advisor and works with one Fifth Grade classroom. Students are seen once to several times per week in a small group setting. Students attend their designated sessions, during specials, Morning Ex, and tutorials. Often, Learning Resource teachers communicate with students’ outside tutors to coordinate remediation goals. During weekly team meetings, students’ progress in core classes is monitored. Learning Resource students have access to online resources that focus on organization, homework management, and skill building.
Middle School Physical Education

Willie Banks (6th grade Activity; 7th grade Coed Fitness)
Terry Davis (6th Boys; 8th Coed Activity)
Tyler Heidtke (7th grade Boys, 8th grade Boys)
Pat Pagnucco (6th grade Girls; 8th grade Girls)
Virginia Iverson / Kara Turpin (7th grade Girls, 8th grade Coed Fitness, 8th Grade #specialtopics)
Jan Zoufal (6th grade Coed Fitness; 7th grade Coed Activity)

Course Overview

Physical Education is an important component of the middle school experience. The Physical Education Department offers a variety of sports and leisure activities within the curriculum to meet the needs of our students. Classes are designed to promote physical development and skills acquisition in individual, dual, and team activities. We also emphasize teaching the cognitive aspects of physical fitness, biomechanics, game strategy, and rules. Ethical conduct, positive emotional expression, sportsmanship and teamwork are fostered at all times.

Objectives

The Physical Education Department shares the general objectives of the Parker School. The Department’s unique contribution to the school curriculum is to promote the development of the whole child through participation in physical activities and movement. Shared objectives include the development of thoughtful, reflective, active individual members of democratic society. We place special emphasis on the development of ethical character, self-discipline, self-expression through movement and collaborative spirit through group activities.

Specific Objectives include:

- organic development
- neuromuscular skills development
- interpretive cortical development
- positive emotional expression and control
- a lifetime desire to participate in healthful physical activity
6th Grade Intramural Program

Jan Zoufal
Room 102C
Ext. 5369

Mission: The Physical Education department’s mission is to provide the opportunity for students entering the 6th grade to engage in physical activity outside of PE class and our middle school athletic program. This intramural program will allow all sixth graders, both those involved in extra-curricular sports as well as those who are not, the chance to participate in a monitored, positive environment promoting good sportsmanship, social interaction and physical wellness. It is suggested that students eat a healthy breakfast before arriving.

Rationale: The Physical Education department is optimistic that keeping students active and engaged before the school day will be a benefit that enhances their school experience. Intramural programs will increase the level of physical activity and improve the immediate and long-term health of our students. Positive activities will help increase the self-esteem of our students during a transition period from the Intermediate School to the Middle School.

Schedule: Intramurals will be held on Monday, Wednesday and Friday mornings from 7:30-8:00.

Registration: All 6th grade students are welcome to sign up for 1 or all of the sessions that will be offered throughout the year. Schedules and activities will be distributed after County Fair.
Sixth Grade Visual Arts

Caroline Gardner, Katie Palmer, Nick Rupard, Kay Silva
Ext. 5453, 5452, 5140, 5328

Course Overview

In Sixth Grade students begin a new approach to the art and craft of the well-made object. Working with teachers familiar to them from Lower School years, they will be challenged to expand their vocabulary of description and form in more concentrated courses in discrete disciplines within the visual arts. Consistent with other disciplines in sixth grade, they will receive grades with comments.

Picture making or two-dimensional work will be taught in Drawing and Photography while three-dimensional work will be produced in Sculpture and Shop. Each of these four classes is a semester long. A student will have two in sixth grade and two in seventh. Some of the work in each class and each semester will be connected to their studies in other disciplines, such as history or literature.

Objectives

Our Middle School Program aims to develop in students the discipline of craftsmanship, a respect for materials and tools, the excitement of discovery in their own creative process and an appreciation for the freedom that comes with mastery.

Highlights

**Drawing and Painting** - Drawing concentrates on working from observation using organic and geometric shapes. Emphasis is on a coordinated range of values. Painting focuses on composition color theory and painting technique. Excellence in craftsmanship is a priority throughout.

**Sculpture** - In this class, students explore the possibilities of manipulating form through a variety of skills, media and concepts. In clay, coil construction is used to make a traditional terra cotta pot and the slab technique is used to make a mug. Foam core is used to build a fantasy architectural project for the fictitious Tiny Town.

**Photography** - Students will pursue past and present photographic techniques. In the darkroom they will learn how to make photograms and sabatiers. This magical process in the darkroom is becoming a lost art and is of paramount importance in showing where photography was and is going. The second half of the semester is devoted to using a digital point and shoot camera. They will learn about the rule of thirds and the many functions of a camera. Students will also be introduced to photoshop and the limitless applications one can apply to their photographs.
Woodworking – In sixth and seventh grade woodworking develops skills with hand and power tools. Techniques in joinery and finishing are perused as well as detailed instruction in tool use. A balance of structured projects and independent design is a hallmark of the class. Respect for various woods and safe-operating procedures are emphasized. Practical (crafting a spoon) and sculptural application is encouraged.

Student Evaluation

Formal and informal critiques as well as self-evaluation play important roles in the artistic process. The students’ attitude and effort, interaction and involvement are all significant factors in their skill development and understanding and are considered in the assessment of their work.
### Course Overview

This course is designed to help students discover and develop their individual creative potential and apply their creativity to a series of class projects. Students will find ways to develop their ideas by exploring a variety of improvisational techniques. The focus of the Middle School Performing Arts Program for this grade level is *environment*, a focus by which students learn to develop their own original characters and situations into dramatic scenes. In addition to enhancing their creative imaginations, students will begin to hone their skills as actors through exercises designed to build strength and flexibility in the voice and body as well as enhance each student’s ability to focus and concentrate on stage. Through this process, students will learn the importance of ensemble effort and continuity.

### Core Concepts and Skills

There are four core concepts which the students will be exposed to and apply throughout the school year: creating and performing within the framework of *ensemble*, improvising within the context of *agreement*, working in the *present*, and creating dialogue through *declarative statements*. The students will explore how *environment* plays a pivotal role in support of these core concepts.

### Methods of Evaluation

Students will be evaluated on their ability to stay focused both on and off stage, their eagerness to participate in individual and group projects, and their willingness to cooperate and be supportive of their peers throughout the creative process. Students will be expected to approach the material in this course with a positive attitude, show a solid effort toward mastering the skills and concepts covered and make a positive contribution to the class. At the end of each unit, the students’ recall, understanding, and incorporation of the skills taught will be assessed through the utilization of diagnostic games and exercises. During the evaluation process the students will not receive side coaching, but rather will be provided with the opportunity to demonstrate their own ability to apply these attributes. The results of this evaluation process will serve two needs; namely, to assess each student’s progress and to identify which skills and concepts need to be reviewed. Additionally, the students will receive four (4) reports in the school year: specific comments will be included in the one (1) mid-semester and one (1) end of semester report for each school year semester.
Course Overview


Highlights

In the 6th grade, regularly scheduled writing workshops provide students with time and incentives to write in a variety of modes and offer them multiple opportunities to learn to enjoy the process of revision. Researched and analytical writing finds its beginnings in essays, response papers and reading diaries. Students are taught the use of Kenneth Burke’s pentad and other strategies to do close readings of literary works and to interview, and write reports about, real individuals. Students write also for the spatial and multimedia environment of the Internet. Students’ imaginative writing is grounded in their study of poets and poetic forms from several cultures. They work, for example, with Asian verse forms, and with some of those developed by American writers. These exercises and projects, with concomitant constant attention to sentence diagramming, paragraph integrity, vocabulary acquisition and orthography, help a student develop his or her own voice while producing written work embodying the standards for accuracy, clarity and effectiveness.

Each student works with his or her classmates to produce a worker interview, and this project provides an excellent opportunity for students to develop writing, interviewing and research skills and to learn to work effectively with peers. To prepare for this project, students study oral history and documentary techniques and excerpts from works by Studs Terkel.

Evaluation

Each student maintains a writing portfolio throughout the year. All drafts, revisions and completed papers are maintained in the portfolio. Class participation is a must, as is keeping up with all reading and writing assignments. The writing portfolio and the quality of the student’s contributions in class provide the basis for evaluation.
Sixth Grade History and Social Studies

Keedra Gibba
Room 338
Ext. 5356

Course Overview

Sixth grade students will begin the History and Social Studies Department’s six-semester middle school sequence with a course of study that aims to broaden the student’s understanding of the interplay between people and the social and natural environments in which they live. Throughout the year and the middle school program, students will build upon five underlying standards: identity, critical thinking, voice, self-care, and empathy.

History and Social Studies includes, but is not limited to history. This interdisciplinary course will involve: geography; science and evolution; study of various creation myths; and study of literature, art, math, and current events (see below). Our study of the present will involve some history of the Americas and our relationship to the land on which we live to help contextualize our learning. We will focus most on African and Asian cultures and contributions to society.

The ongoing identity work will also begin very early in the year and will allow students to attend to some of Parker’s central educational aims: diversity, equity and inclusion. Implicit in many conventional accounts of history is the notion that we should disregard the lives of women, working people and people of color-- we are led to view history and current events from the standpoint of the dominant groups. Students will examine point of view and the power associated with dominant and silenced voices throughout the school year. Activities will challenge students to be empathetic as well as critical thinkers and students will be encouraged to critique the roots of inequality in curriculum, school structure and the larger society-- always asking: How are we involved? What can we do?

Our materials will include globes, maps, primary source documents, literature, film and current news reports. Class activities and assignments include simulation, debate, research, discussion, historical enactment, role-play and interview. The students will engage in paragraph, essay, journal, narrative and research writing. The goal is to sharpen writing, reading, speaking and listening skills through this exciting and relevant content.

Current Events: Students are expected to maintain a weekly current events journal based off of identified themes from the course. We will identify and examine news sources to strengthen media literacy skills, be conversant in current news and engage in topics relevant to our times and our Social Studies curricular themes. Some possible themes for current events are Environment and Climate (especially since we study the Agricultural Revolution in history), Immigration and Migration (building upon our knowledge of the earliest Homo Sapiens' migrations out of Africa as well as historical push and pull factors of various people in history), Schooling and Education (obviously relevant to the lives of our students), and Policing, Punishment and the Legal System (the study of which could help us think about our current social order). Related to this latter theme, in History 6, we also study ways in which societies have formed and maintained a social order (civilizations). Additionally, a major theme will be developing and shaping perspectives. We know that informal and formal education has a significant impact among other factors that shape point of view. Though the specific events to be discussed cannot be predicted, what is certain is that space will be provided for frequent individual reflection and group discussion. Students will be expected to watch, read and listen to news and reflect on it individually in journals, at home with family and in the classroom. We should also assume that there will be some level of discomfort, disagreement and challenge, and this is not a reason to omit current events from a Social
Studies course. Unlike historical events, current events may feel more relevant to our lives, which is why we invite the study of our times into the classroom. Families are invited and encouraged to discuss current events and discussions that arise from our class.

Objectives

Identity:
- Students will explore privilege and oppression within their own identity
- Students are able to express tensions and relationships between self-identification and how society defines their group
- Students will define intersectionality and how different intersections impact one’s experiences and identities
- Students will learn about others’ identities and how it might shape their experiences of the world (as differently from their own)
- Students will listen to and amplify voices of marginalized people in our society
- Students are able to identify and define various social identifiers such as race, class, gender, religion, sexual orientation, nationality, etc
- Students will study the histories of how various identities were constructed and how that impacts their existence in our world today
- Students will contribute to our community’s learning about students own identity

Critical Thinking:
- Students are able to define and identify master narrative and counter narrative perspectives
- Students are able to read texts and identify author’s purpose and bias
- Students are able to identify examples of resistance to master narrative
- Students are able to identify master and counter narratives in historical texts
- Students will challenge various forms of oppression in their immediate environment and the world

Voice:
- Students will cultivate their own “voice” as a form of expression AND to resist oppressions that they identify as significant to themselves and others with whom they form solidarity
- Students will examine ways in which people have used their voices to resist injustice (particularly amongst people with whom students have a similar identity)
- Students will examine the important difference between “solidarity” and “charity” (what does it mean to be an ally?)
- Students will identify risk associated with amplifying counter narratives

Self-Care:
- Students will examine ways in which freedom fighters maintain self-care practices in order to continue working against injustice
- Students will identify ways in which social justice work might impact themselves and others emotionally
- Students will study various impacts of historical trauma on groups of people
- Students will self-advocate when experiencing stress related to course assignments and activities
Empathy:

- Students will examine how “love” can be revolutionary
- Students will learn ways to validate experiences of others’ who differ from their own
- Students will learn the differences between “sympathy” and “empathy”
- Students will demonstrate respect that every person is an “expert” of their own experiences
- Students will learn examples of restorative justice models
- Students will demonstrate evidence of active listening
- Students will identify individuals, policies, models and plans that show signs of empathy

Student Evaluation

Students will be evaluated on the basis of their efforts to satisfactorily complete class projects and homework assignments, quizzes and tests, maintenance of an organized notebook, and participation in classroom activities. Students will also be guided in regular self-evaluation and goal-setting.
Course Overview

The sixth grade mathematics course focuses on exploring different branches of mathematics while at the same time reinforcing familiar concepts. The materials used are mostly teacher-generated and drawn from a wide variety of resources, especially those from the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics. Connections are made with other subjects when appropriate. Classroom calculators are provided.

Objectives

A common thought of students upon entering the sixth grade is that all there is to mathematics is arithmetic. While arithmetic is certainly fundamental, students will experience the richness, beauty, diversity, and practicality that mathematics has to offer. The NCTM Standards in Mathematics are an integral part of this course, as well as their four goals for communication, reasoning, problem solving, and connections. Students will study operations with rational numbers, topics within introductory algebra, probability, transformations, and geometry.

Good News! Powers of 2 – Problems involving powers of 2 will make appearances throughout the year.

Student Evaluation

Each student is required to keep a provided math notebook, which will be checked periodically for organization. Students may use lined, unlined or grid paper for taking notes, and a pencil (please have an abundant supply at the ready). The text for the course is comprised of resource materials, teacher-handouts and student notes.

Homework is assigned three to four nights a week (depending on the unit), with a test approximately every three weeks. Semester grades are determined from tests, homework completion, notebook checks, class participation and the final project. Mrs. Masters can be available for additional help on Tuesday, Thursday or Friday mornings before school begins. It is helpful for the student to plan ahead (talk after class/email) to let Mrs. Masters know to expect them.

If you are interested in obtaining a reference book to keep at home, this is a handy one:

*MATH ON CALL: A Mathematics Handbook* by Great Source Education Group
Sixth Grade Music

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<th>Rob Denien</th>
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Course Overview

Sixth graders are in an important transitional phase in their lives. Parker’s approach to their music education reflects this fact by providing a variety of music experiences which are sensitive to the needs of the individual student. In Sixth Grade music, students will choose between chorus or band for the entire school year. Both classes include units in music appreciation, music theory, and notation or other applied activities that are inspired by their curriculum or interests.

Objectives and Highlights

Sixth Grade Music meets twice a week, once as an ensemble and once divided into four smaller groups. The curriculum begins with an exploration period in which students play all of the band instruments and have a choral singing experience. Once the students split into two groups, they will develop vocal or instrumental skills to learn how to better express ideas and emotions through music. Highlights of the sixth grade curriculum include the study of folk music from India and China, culminating in a musical and theatrical performance which displays their exploration of the history and culture of both India and China.

The Sixth Grade groups perform at least twice a year. The Choir performs once at Vespers in December and at the Spring Music Showcase in May. The Sixth Grade Band performs at an MX in February and at the Spring Music Showcase in May. These performances serve as a final projects and therefore, participation in these concerts is mandatory.

Student Evaluation

Students are evaluated on the basis of their effort and attitude in class, in rehearsals and in performances. Occasional musical homework music will ensure students are actively participating and engaged. Observations about each student’s initiative, cooperation, and attitude will form the basis of a student’s success in music. Students are also graded through quarterly assessments. Any concerns about a student’s work or behavior will be communicated to advisors, parents and guardians by email or phone call.
Sixth Grade Science

The middle school science program focuses on these outcomes:

- Student can describe methods of scientific inquiry and the engineering design process and apply them to investigating, questioning and solving problems.
- Student can describe and carry out experimental procedures.
- Student can perform laboratory tasks appropriate to the field.
- Student can interpret and communicate scientific information using written, oral and/or graphical means.
- Student can describe and analyze one or more relationships among science, technology and society and demonstrate an understanding of scientific applications in everyday life.
- Student can demonstrate logical reasoning in explaining natural phenomena, experimental procedures or outcomes, and/or application of scientific or technological concepts.
- Students can describe and carry out the engineering design process.

**Course Overview**

This year the sixth grade will study the earth. The earth is composed of the lithosphere, the hydrosphere, and the atmosphere. Each sphere contributes uniquely to various systems on the planet. Sixth graders study these systems and examine the contributions of the three spheres to each system. Homework is assigned regularly and is posted on the FWP homework website. Most assignments are submitted online via Google Docs.

**Topics**

The sixth grade year begins with the study of the formation of the Earth and its satellite, including the introductions of vocabulary such as rotation, revolution, equinox, and solstice. We examine the reasons for the seasons on Earth and connect this to the Miracle Planet. Preparation for the trip to the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore (September 25 - 27) involves the study of the five distinct ecosystems present in this interesting environment. Observation, recording of data, and sketching are important components of the trip. Students begin taking notes in their Trip Journal in science class, maintain the Journal during the trip, and then finish the activities and investigations in science class.

Plate tectonics explains the forces that significantly change the surface of the earth. During the study of the lithosphere and the rock cycle, these tremendous forces are examined. Students are required to recognize four types of rocks during a rock identification lab and then tested on this information. They write a short story in which the main character is a carefully researched and beautifully described rock. Students then explore the theory of plate tectonics and the evidence for this theory. A project and presentation in the Library Maker Space and five paragraph persuasive essay lead to a final coding project lead by Mr. Colestock and Ms. Zerega.

In January and February, basic concepts of physics are introduced in preparation for the study of the hydrosphere and atmosphere. Density and phases of matter are explored in a series of labs. Students are
expected to measure and then calculate the density of a variety of types of matter. In addition, the connections between density, buoyancy, phases of matter, and temperature are considered. This unit is taught just after the decimal unit in 6th grade mathematics, so students are able to practice the skills learned in math class.

Students revisit these concepts during the study of the hydrosphere. The three phases of water, solid, liquid and gas are explored in the context of the water cycle, and students build water cycle systems and observe and record the cycle in action. A study of water issues in the developing world is completed in April. This unit asks students to work with a science topic such as water chemistry and study this topic in depth in one of seven countries. Each student writes a two-page APA style research paper and then proposes a specific project to improve access to clean water in his/her country.

Chemistry and chemical reactions are the key to understanding climate change, so atomic structure and the Periodic Table of the Elements are introduced in the final unit. Using information from the study of the formation of the earth, students finish the year with a study of climate change based on the chemical and physical changes in the atmosphere that have led to the current state of the Earth’s atmosphere.

**Student Evaluation**

Sixth graders should arrive on time for class prepared to work. During class time, each student needs to focus to the best of his/her ability and work cooperatively with lab partners. Homework is assigned most days. Links to resources used in class and instructions for assignments will be posted on the Homework Website. Tests are given for each unit. Homework and projects are 80% - 85% of the final grade for each semester and quiz and test grades are 20% - 15%.

**Resources**

- Ck12.org online readings
- Youtube clips including National Geographic’s “The Story of Earth”, Miracle Planet’s “The Heat Within”, and Bozeman Science’s “Atomic Structure” and “The Electromagnetic Spectrum
Sixth Grade Spanish  
Suzan Morrison  Ext. 5368  Room 330  
Nikki Joseph  Ext. 5368  Room 330

Course Overview

The Spanish program will continue to expose students to the Spanish language as well as to the diverse cultural heritages of the peoples that speak this language in the world today. The course will teach students how to understand written and spoken Spanish in the context of familiar topics. These include introducing themselves, describing themselves, school life and daily activities, and pastimes. In addition, a variety of opportunities for oral expression will be provided. Work in the classroom will be student-tailored and varied, providing students with numerous learning situations in which they can improve their listening and speaking skills.

Objectives

The primary goal of the class will be to develop each student’s ability to communicate for meaningful purpose in a second language. We will work to provide an environment in which anxiety towards learning a foreign language is reduced and students feel comfortable as well as challenged. Functional use of the four skills (reading, writing, speaking, and listening) will be developed, with a particular emphasis on speaking and listening. In addition, students will be taught effective learning strategies for foreign language study. Importance will be placed on building the foundation for further language study. The course will aim to foster interest in the study of foreign languages and cultures in general, in addition to Spanish-speaking cultures.

Highlights

The course will be primarily taught in Spanish. Much of the work in the classroom will use authentic language samples such as Hispanic music, videos, listening exercises, and short readings. In this manner, students will be exposed on a daily basis to the target language. There will be a variety of ongoing individual and group projects researching specific aspects of Hispanic culture during the year. Some specific projects will investigate the following: important dates in Spanish-speaking cultures such as La Semana Santa, Christmas in Spain, La Feria de abril, La Tomatina, Las Fiestas de San Fermín and various other Hispanic celebrations and traditions. Whenever possible, we will integrate topics that relate to material being discussed in the students’ other classes.

Student Evaluation

Students will be asked to participate in many ways in the classroom. In general, they will be expected to present a positive attitude and to work cooperatively with their classmates. A portion of their grade will take into account their class participation, including their attitude, motivation and progress. A variety of evaluations, such as completion of individual and group assignments, quizzes, oral interviews, and self-evaluations, will also be used to provide students with an awareness of individual progress.
6th Grade Class Trip

The Sixth Grade takes a class trip in the fall to Camp Goodfellow in the Indiana Dunes. Accompanied by their teachers from Parker, students explore dune ecology, go on hikes, tell stories around the campfire, and learn about themselves and their classmates in a different way than is always possible at school. One of the goals of the trip is to have the whole grade return to Parker working as a more cooperative, cohesive unit. Therefore, many of the activities revolve around team building exercises and group problem solving. Another goal is to help the students to discover something new about themselves. In the past students have kept journals, gone on night hikes, learned astronomy, created art, and had a wonderful time.

END OF SIXTH GRADE SECTION
Course Overview

In seventh grade students continue our survey of the art and craft of the well-made object in Middle School. They are challenged to expand their vocabulary of description and form in more concentrated courses in discrete disciplines within the visual arts. Consistent with other disciplines in seventh grade, they receive grades and comments that reflect progress in craftsmanship, industriousness and participation.

Picture making or two-dimensional work is taught in Drawing and Photography while three-dimensional work is produced in Sculpture and Shop. **Each of these four classes is a semester long. A student will have two in sixth grade and two in seventh grade.** Some of the work in each class and each semester is connected to their studies in other disciplines such as History or English.

Objectives

Our Middle School Program aims to develop in students the discipline of craftsmanship, a respect for materials and tools, the excitement of discovery in their own creative process, and an appreciation for the freedom that comes with mastery.

Highlights

**Drawing and Painting** - Drawing concentrates on working from observation using organic and geometric shapes. Emphasis is on a coordinated range of values. Painting focuses on composition, color theory and painting technique. Excellence in craftsmanship is a priority throughout.

**Sculpture** – In this class, students explore the possibilities of manipulating form through a variety of skills, media and concepts. In clay, coil construction is used to make a traditional terra cotta pot and the slab technique is used to make a mug. Foam core is used to build a fantasy architectural project for the fictitious Tiny Town.

**Photography** – Students will pursue past and present photographic techniques. In the darkroom they will learn how to make photograms and sabatiers. This magical process in the darkroom is becoming a lost art and is of paramount importance in showing where photography was and is going. The second half of the semester is devoted to using a digital point and shoot camera. They will learn about the rule of thirds and the many functions of a camera. Students will also be introduced to photoshop and the limitless applications one can do to their photographs.

**Woodworking** - In sixth and seventh grade the focus is on the development of skills with hand power tools. Techniques in joinery and finishing are perused as well as detailed instruction in tool use. A
balance of structured projects and independent design is a hallmark of the class. Respect for various woods and safe-operating procedures are emphasized. Practical (crafting a spoon) and sculptural application is encouraged.

**Student Evaluation**

Individual and group critiques are used in the classes to enhance growth. Self-evaluation is encouraged as part of the overall evaluation of students’ participation, development of skill and understanding. Grades and comments are consistent in form with other disciplines.
Course Overview

This course is designed to help students discover and develop their individual creative potential and apply their creativity to a series of class projects. Students will find ways to develop their ideas by exploring a variety of improvisational techniques. The focus for this grade level is character: a focus by which students learn to develop their own original characters and situations (an extension of their work with environment in sixth grade) into dramatic/comedic scenes. In addition to enhancing their creative imaginations, students will begin to hone their skills as actors through exercises designed to build strength and flexibility in the voice and body as well as enhance each student’s ability to focus and concentrate on stage. Through this process, students will learn the importance of ensemble effort and continuity.

Objective

The primary objective of the department is to create a comfortable environment in which students are challenged to work cooperatively as they learn to express themselves creatively.

Student Evaluation

Students will be evaluated on their ability to stay focused both on and off stage, their eagerness to participate in individual and group projects, and their willingness to cooperate and be supportive of their peers throughout the creative process. Students will be expected to approach the material in this course with a positive attitude, show a solid effort toward mastering the skills and concepts covered and make a positive contribution to the class. During the evaluation process the students will not receive side coaching, but rather will be provided with the opportunity to demonstrate their own ability to apply these attributes. The results of this evaluation process will serve two needs; namely, to assess each student’s progress and to identify which skills and concepts need to be reviewed. Additionally, the students will receive four (4) reports in the school year: specific comments will be included in the one (1) mid-semester and one (1) end of semester report for each school year semester.
Course Overview

In the seventh grade, students approach reading, writing, language mechanics, and vocabulary through the study of literature. Students build on the work that they began in sixth grade, both the elements of prose and poetry and the study of the structure of the English language. This year’s study of fiction capitalizes on what they have already learned to give students greater confidence in their own ability to find meaning in what they read and how they write.

Our study begins with S. E Hinton’s *The Outsiders*. This novel and the other works we study share common themes and speak to a number of shared questions: What makes me the same as and what makes me different from other people? What misperceptions of others do I have? How do I know where it is that I belong? Does “belonging” mean “excluding” others? What is my “universe of obligation?” Do others see things the way that I see them? What can we learn about ourselves through reading fiction? Why do we tell stories? What is the use of stories that aren’t even true? Through these shared questions we will look at the different ways that authors have approached these same issues. Some of the texts that we will study are:

*The Outsiders* by S.E. Hinton  
*Brown Girl Dreaming* by Jacqueline Woodson  
*145th Street: Short Stories* by Walter Dean Myers  
*Romeo and Juliet* by William Shakespeare  
*Pashmina* by Nidhi Chanani  
*Haroun and the Sea of Stories* by Salman Rushdie

Independent reading both inside and outside the classroom is encouraged, and students will have the opportunity to share both positive and negative reading response with each other about their own experiences as readers through conversation and their individual blogs. We will continue to explore and develop an appreciation for the wide variety of genres and voices in young adult literature. Through reading and reflective writing, we will examine our preferences and personal choices in literature.

Seventh graders will read and write frequently. Large writing assignments grow from the study of the texts we are reading for class, and most of that writing will take place here in school. Students will be asked to use ideas, information, and personal connections to literature as a basis for their written work. Vocabulary development, grammar, and mechanics will be addressed through the writing process as well as through formal study of the English language. The writing process will include prewriting planning, drafting, responding, developing writing strategies, revising, editing, and presenting.
Objectives

The most important goal of seventh grade English is to build greater confidence in students’ ability to read, write, and enjoy the English language. Students will work to become more sophisticated readers and to develop greater skill in unlocking for themselves a richer understanding of what they read. Seventh graders will write in multiple genres and revise their writing, so they can develop mastery of clear, concise, and interesting written communication.

Highlights

Storytelling and writing are at the center of the seventh-grade curriculum. Students will investigate the purposes and practices of the telling of stories; they will focus on how people, places, and traditions mold stories as well as how prevalent themes in older pieces of literature influence what we read today. They will write in other genres and for other audiences, giving students a real and important role in the communication of what they learn. The seventh graders will create and tell stories of their own, and those stories will be collected in a class anthology.

Evaluation

Students can expect homework daily (often preparatory reading). Once we begin exploring novels, there will be reading assigned for everyday—even if we will not immediately discuss the text in class. If students keep up on their nightly reading, they should not feel inundated or overwhelmed with the workload. A variety of projects, presentations, and writing assignments designed to allow students to analyze and use ideas and events in the novels that we read will account for approximately half of their final grade. The other half of their grade is based on readiness for class, participation and engagement in class activities, completeness of in and out of class writing assignments, vocabulary and language development work, and other projects and assessments.
Course Overview

The theme of the Seventh Grade History course is “Culture, Citizenship, and Identity.” We will try to hone in on what comprises a culture, focus on the study of culture, and the anthropological and social study of civilizations of different eras. We will examine and challenge our notions of what it means to be a citizen and the power and responsibilities inherent in that role. And we will also look at personal identity this year in order for students to explore and consider the many “identifiers” that contribute to who they are as individuals. Additionally, we will also be exploring the nature of our own modern world and the challenges we face.

Objectives

Students will build on skills from the 6th grade. They will continue to learn basic note-taking skills and to work more on how to research, craft, and defend a historical argument. Students will also be exposed to new kinds of group work and independent assignments that draw from all of their academic and creative skills. Students will further develop their writing in crafting short and long persuasive and analytical essays. Recognizing that students learn in different ways, the class will ask students to produce work with a variety of skills and in multiple modes.

The use of technology will be an important element to the 7th grade year. Students will have several assignments that ask them to show their learning through multimedia platforms. In addition, the one-to-one iPad program will ask the students to use the device as a regular learning instrument. Students will use the iPad as a reading, notetaking, research, and organizational tool. But technology is merely a means to an end; the fundamental learning goals of analysis, inquiry, and core skills will always be the focus of the course. And students will be coached on how to use the technology appropriately and skillfully, along with learning basic etiquette with the device.

Highlights

Our first semester will start with a focus on architecture. Students will study famous buildings from history and research how these buildings help to explain the cultures and civilizations from where they came. Next, students will take part in a brief Citizenship unit when they will learn about elections, voting, and the particular offices that will be on the ballot on November 3rd, 2020. Our South/Central America unit will delve into the world of the Maya, Aztec and Inca, using a variety of lenses from primary sources to historical novels. Next, since monuments have been part of the national conversation the past few years, students will explore how these public sites can teach us about who we remember and who gets to decide. The unit will end with students investigating Chicago monuments and nominating who should be the city’s next public monument. As the course shifts to the Middle East, we will focus on the religions and history of the three Abrahamic Faiths, with more emphasis on Islam. The year ends with a major research project on the Nobel Peace Prize. Students select one laureate, research the person’s life and work, analyze the conflict the laureate faced, and create an audio/visual product as a capstone. Throughout the year the class will also devote time to examining, analyzing, and discussing current event topics.
A fundamental part of adolescence is the exploration of one’s identity. Developmentally, students are becoming more eager to and are more capable of exploring who they are. This presents a unique curricular opportunity. Students will tackle the question of “Who am I?” using an interdisciplinary approach - in both science and history class. In history during this unit, students will learn about 8 cultural identifiers and consider the non-genetic features of their identities, such as race, age, and gender. The unit will culminate in a self-directed project exploring identity.

**Student Evaluation**

Student evaluations will be based on their development as historians. In other words, a student’s ability to think critically, reason carefully, write accurately, and present information thoughtfully. Grades will be based on a student’s commitment to personal excellence, i.e. a consistent work ethic demonstrated through homework and class assignments showcasing one’s best work, and on positive performances on papers, group discussions, research projects, and oral presentations. Students will also be graded on their individual contributions to group projects. On most projects students will have the opportunity to revise their work. This gives them the opportunity to improve their skills and bolster their grades. Students will also earn a “Citizenship” grade each semester, which takes into account each student’s preparation, participation, positive peer-to-peer relationships, and contributions in making the classroom a safe and productive one. For students looking for bigger challenges, the class offers “starred problems” throughout the year. These are independent, long-term projects that are history-related extension projects. They are typically more complex assignments and are completed in addition to the regular class work. Extra credit is awarded for the successful completion of these projects.
Course Overview

Content in seventh grade mathematics comes from geometry, algebra, arithmetic and number theory, probability and principles of counting, and descriptive statistics. Students utilize and reinforce knowledge from earlier grades, but most work occurs in novel contexts and applications. Major themes of the course include: recognition and use of patterns; use of variables; functions; applications of fractions; decimals and percent; probability; number concepts and theory; proportionality; area; and the organization and interpretation of data.

Instructional units and activities typically incorporate concepts and skills from several different themes. For example, the hats and tiles unit, while focusing on probability, involves use of area models, fractions and decimals, observation of patterns, a functional relationship, and a look at limits. Other units and activities are similarly designed to incorporate and connect ideas and skills encompassing multiple themes.

Many lessons start with a problem to explore in which patterns can be used to analyze and strategically solve the problem. Often there are opportunities for students to investigate additional questions beyond the original problem. Where appropriate, students use drawings, models, or measurements in investigating relationships and developing concepts. Several lessons emphasize applications of mathematics in real-world contexts.

Underlying Goals

A primary goal is that students achieve understanding of concepts and processes. Another is that they develop skills which can be applied in a variety of contexts. I want students to be actively involved in investigating and applying mathematical ideas; and I strive to emphasize mathematical reasoning, communication, and the development of a variety of strategies for solving problems. Of course, strengthening each student’s number sense and maintaining automatic recall of number facts and procedures are also central goals of the course.
In seventh grade, students continue to explore music through experiential courses in either band or choir. Music classes meet twice each week to cultivate students’ growth in the areas of music appreciation, aural skills, music literacy, and performance. Both band and choir are year-long course commitments, which allows students to foster musical skills based upon personal interests.

Objectives and Highlights

Seventh grade music continues strengthening students’ understanding and appreciation of music, as developed in sixth grade. Students work together in both small and large ensembles to foster the cooperation, self-reliance, courage, and empathy developed through musical study. Highlights of the seventh grade curriculum include studying and performing elements of historical and popular music and musical theatre, which culminate in a class field trip in the spring.

The seventh grade groups perform at least twice each year: The choir performs once in December and again at the Spring Music Showcase in May. The Seventh Grade Band performs once during the first semester, and again at the Spring Music Showcase in May. These performances serve as a final, culminating projects and therefore participation in these concerts is mandatory.

Student Evaluation

Students are evaluated on the basis of their effort and engagement in class, during rehearsals and in performances. Occasional homework practicing assignments guide students to actively participate, prepare and engage in music. Observations on students’ initiative, cooperation, attitude, and growth form the basis of a student’s evaluation in music class. Comments or concerns regarding a student will be communicated to advisors, parents and guardians by email or phone call.
The middle school science program focuses on these goals:

- Student can describe methods of scientific inquiry and the engineering design process and apply them to investigating, questioning and solving problems.
- Student can describe and carry out experimental procedures.
- Student can perform laboratory tasks appropriate to the field.
- Student can interpret and communicate scientific information using written, oral and/or graphical means.
- Student can describe and analyze one or more relationships among science, technology and society and demonstrate an understanding of scientific applications in everyday life.
- Student can demonstrate logical reasoning in explaining natural phenomena, experimental procedures or outcomes, and/or application of scientific or technological concepts.
- Students can describe and carry out the engineering design process.

Course Overview

To study science is to be engaged in the world not just as a curious observer, but as one who questions. In seventh grade we will focus on life science as we consider the following questions: what defines life? how are living things and processes on Earth interdependent? how has life has adapted to the changing conditions on the planet? what is our place in this world? Our understanding will be grounded in the nature of science and the processes used by scientists to conduct research. Seventh grade scientists will be encouraged to relate new ideas and topics to their own personal experiences and overall interests.

Objectives

The goal of this course is to develop scientific skills through biology content. Students will build their skill in practices such as: asking questions and defining problems; developing and using models; planning and carrying out investigations; analyzing and interpreting data; using mathematical and computational thinking; constructing explanations and designing solutions; engaging in argument from evidence; and obtaining, evaluating and communicating information (NGSS Science and Engineering practices). They will also practice data collection, graphing, and microscope skills. Students will build fluency in developing claims, supporting them with evidence, and articulating reasoning. The class will explore the outdoor resources around Parker in order to learn more about the ecosystem in which the school resides.

Highlights

Students will be responsible for keeping a science notebook which will contain notes, lab data, written reflections. In addition, we will utilize technology to enhance our experience through the use of videos, apps, and student creation of digital content. Hands-on wet labs, walking “field trips,” and projects will allow students to investigate and analyze living organisms and their interaction with the environment.
Cross-curricular units are woven into the curriculum. A fundamental part of adolescence is the exploration of one’s identity. Developmentally, students are becoming more eager to and are more capable of exploring who they are. This presents a unique opportunity. Students will tackle the question of “Who am I?” using an interdisciplinary approach - in both science and history class. In science class, students will explore the biological and genetic factors of their identity such as cellular composition, traits, and gender. The unit will culminate in a self-directed project exploring identity.

Additionally, students will work with the STEM and coding teacher throughout the year to incorporate computational thinking and engineering and design skills into the curriculum. For example, students will design simulations of a disease outbreak using Scratch and work through the design thinking process to investigate biomimicry. To keep abreast of current events students will be asked to research and share “Science in the News” articles with their peers.

**Student Evaluation**

Students will be asked to demonstrate their understanding in a variety of modalities throughout the year. Homework will be assigned when relevant and will include a mixture of preparation and practice graded for completion. Long-term project and lab work will be evaluated for progress, analysis, and scientific methodology. Students are expected to be engaged, active learners who contribute their talents and perspective during group work. All students will also be encouraged to evaluate their growth as a learner and self-advocate. During individual conferences students will be asked to reflect on their progress and mastery of learning objectives and to demonstrate their understanding with work from the class.
Seventh Grade Spanish  
Edinson López Flores  
Room 350  
Ext. 5402

Course Overview

The Spanish program will continue to explore the Spanish language as well as the diverse cultural heritages of the peoples that speak this language in the world today. The course will teach students how to understand written and spoken Spanish in the context of familiar topics. These include describing themselves and their home environment, leisure activities, weather, and finally their families. Work in the classroom will be student-oriented and varied, providing students with numerous learning situations in which they can improve their skills.

Objectives

The primary goal of the class will be to develop the students’ ability to communicate for meaningful purposes in a second language. We will work to provide an environment in which anxiety towards learning a world language is reduced and students feel comfortable as well as challenged, investigating the different areas of world language communication. Functional use of the four skills: reading, writing, speaking, and listening will continue to be developed, with emphasis on speaking and writing at this level. Students will learn additional effective learning strategies for world language study. Importance will be placed on building upon the foundation for further language study in Spanish. The course will aim to continue to develop an interest in the study of world languages and cultures in general, in addition to the many Spanish-Speaking cultures.

Highlights

The course aims to be taught primarily in Spanish and much of the work in the classroom will use authentic language samples, such as Spanish music, videos, listening exercises, and short readings. In this manner, students will be exposed on a daily basis to the target language. There will be a variety of ongoing individual and group projects researching specific aspects of Hispanic/Latino culture during the year. Some of the specific projects that we will investigate are the following: the “quinceañera”, influential Hispanics/Latinos, the presence of Hispanic/Latino heritage in the United States, important dates in Spanish-speaking cultures such as “El día de los muertos”, “Los Carnavales”, Fiestas Nacionales, “El día de los Reyes” and others. When possible, we will integrate topics that relate to material being discussed in the students’ other classes.

Student Evaluation

Students will be asked to participate in many ways in the classroom; in general, they will be expected to present a positive attitude and to work cooperatively with their classmates. A portion of their grade will take into account their class participation, including their attitude, motivation, and progress. A variety of evaluations, such as completion of individual and group assignments, quizzes, tests, oral interviews, and self-evaluations will also be used to provide students with an awareness of individual progress.
Seventh Grade Class Trip

Overview

In September, the Seventh Grade will go on their class trip to Pretty Lake, Michigan near Kalamazoo. They will be camping at the Adventure Center at Pretty Lake. The staff at the center is experienced and enthusiastic about working with middle school students. The students will sleep in tents, cook their meals, and work together on many activities designed to promote cooperation and teamwork. They are accompanied by the seventh grade teachers.

Objectives

The trip has several objectives. First, there is a desire to help all students to know each other, and their teachers, in new ways. Of course, this is perfect for students totally new to Parker. The trip also allows us to explore learning in ways we could never do within the confines of classrooms and our daily schedule. Additionally, many of the activities require cooperation, listening, working together, and group problem solving. Our hope is that students will learn new things about themselves and how to support their friends and classmates.

Highlights

The center has many teamwork initiatives. These are challenging and fun and, unsurprisingly, require teamwork. Similarly, cooking for each other, sleeping it in tents, and singing around the campfire all build unity and spirit.

END OF SEVENTH GRADE SECTION
Course Overview

In eighth grade students apply design and context to the variety of skills they have developed in earlier grades. They will be challenged to expand their vocabulary of description and form as they re-experience and enhance those skills. Consistent with other disciplines in eighth grade, their grades and comments will reflect their growing craftsmanship and the depth of their involvement, thought, and participation in the class.

Objectives

Our Middle School Program aims to develop in students the discipline of craftsmanship, a respect for materials and tools, the excitement in their own creative process, an awareness that ideas acquired from many sources can be explored and expressed visually, and an appreciation for the joy that comes with mastery.

Highlights

3D – In Woodworking, hand and power tools are used to make functional objects such as picture frames. Later in the year, shop students build props and sets for the play. In Metals, students will develop light metal craft skills and cold connections to produce decorative objects. These two experiences explore sculpture as both functional and decorative.

2D -- In 2D Art, students explore a variety of techniques in drawing, painting and printmaking. Drawing from observation is focused on making things look realistic by learning about the effects of light and the techniques of blending. The acrylic painting project is based on a modern master work and focuses on blending nuanced colors. The goal of the print project is to create three different overall designs. Students will also explore digital art using Photoshop and IPad drawing programs.

Student Evaluation

Individual and group critiques are used in the classes to enhance growth. Self-evaluation is encouraged as part of the overall evaluation of students’ participation, development of skills and understanding. Grades and comments are consistent in form with other disciplines.
Eighth Grade Drama

Eighth Grade Drama

Course Overview

The Middle School Drama Program is designed to provide a transition from the lower to the upper school drama programs. The students will explore a variety of improvisational and theatrical techniques designed to discover and communicate the point of view of the author/playwright as expressed in written or improvised scenes. Here the student will be provided opportunities to re-visit work done in class in order to apply the three areas of concentration of the middle school drama program: environment, character, and point of view. Namely, the students will develop and apply actor tools designed to analyze and express their individual character’s point of view in context of their immediate, general, and extended environment.

Objectives

The primary objective of the department is to create a comfortable environment in which students are challenged to work cooperatively as they learned to express themselves creatively.

Student Evaluation

Students will be evaluated on their ability to stay focused both on and off stage, their eagerness to participate in individual and group projects, and their willingness to cooperate and be supportive of their peers throughout the creative process. Students will be expected to approach the material in this course with a positive attitude, show a solid effort toward mastering skills and concepts covered, and make a contribution to the classroom community. During the evaluation process the students will not receive side coaching but rather will be provided with the opportunity to demonstrate their own ability to apply these attributes. The results of this evaluation process will serve two needs; namely, to assess each student’s progress and to identify which skills and concepts need to be reviewed. Additionally, the students will receive four (4) reports in the school year: specific comments will be included in the one (1) mid-semester and one (1) end of semester report for each school year semester.
Course Overview and Objectives

Poet Nikki Giovanni says that “Writing is a conversation with reading, a dialogue with thinking.” In eighth grade English students will read widely, discuss openly, write freely, think deeply, and speak confidently. The diversity of literature in eighth grade aims to expose students to a wide range of texts from different genres, points of view, place and time, racial and gender perspectives, and narrative styles. Many of the books explore a common theme of identity – a thread that strongly and personally resonates with eighth graders. Throughout the year, students move from the comprehension of plot and main ideas to a deeper understanding and appreciation of literature and literary technique. We discuss elements of writing like tone, inference, and style as well as character and theme. Students also practice annotation and contextualization strategies that will enhance their reading comprehension. The longer works read in eighth grade portray characters in times of crisis and growth, so class discussions center on how characters deal with these crises and how they view and react to the environments which inflict these complications upon them. This course will also strengthen students’ writing abilities by providing challenging and creative opportunities for written expression. Writing of all kinds – analytic, descriptive, fictional, autobiographic, prose and poetry – is the other main component of the course and students work thoroughly on learning and implementing a writing process that involves planning, writing, revision, and rewriting. Students will build a portfolio of their written work as the year evolves, and will maintain a poetry journal for the year.

Approach and Evaluation: Texts and Homework Expectations

Our book list is as follows: *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* by Sherman Alexie; *Black Boy* by Richard Wright; *And Then There Were None* by Agatha Christie; *Across A Hundred Mountains* by Reyna Grande; *The Poet X* by Elizabeth Acevedo; *Night* by Elie Wiesel; *The Hate U Give* by Angie Thomas; and *The Things They Carried* by Tim O’Brien. Units surrounding each book include vocabulary-building, whole class and small group discussion, individual and group projects, exploration of literary terms and techniques, and a writing component, paying close attention to grammar and the mechanics of writing. In addition, one day a week is set aside for poetry. *Poetry Thursdays* give students weekly exposure to an array of poets and texts, while providing consistent opportunities for composing their own works of poetry.

Homework is assigned most nights and consistently on weekends, the majority of which is daily reading and longer-term writing assignments. Homework is posted in the classroom and on Google Classroom, and students are responsible to remain informed and current. Fifty percent of each student’s assessment is determined by longer written assignments and projects, while reading quizzes, homework assignments, vocabulary work, and class participation combine to make up the other half. Participation is crucial for a successful year, as so much of our curriculum exists in the realm of questioning and verbal and written expression. We cover a lot of challenging territory this year, so grab a book and read along with us.
Course Overview and Objectives

The course builds upon the 6th and 7th grade curriculum – the students will further develop the concepts and skills learned during those two years. The five overarching themes are identity, critical thinking, voice, self-care and empathy. It also aims to spark student curiosity, prompt serious inquiry and foster students’ developing powers of empathy, analysis and interpretation. We will regularly examine context and perspective. Students will explore and practice habits of thinking, collaborating, communicating, and analyzing of information. Our studies and daily assignments will challenge students to think more deeply and critically about history and themselves. Students will continue to practice applied skills such as ethics, social responsibility, problem solving and adaptability. Ultimately, our goal is to empower students as historians to analyze historical events/figures in order to understand and encourage the complexity around causality, correlation, motive and impact. In further understanding historical context and multiple perspectives, students will experience the igniting sparks of creativity, empathy and critical thinking that propel lifelong learning.¹

Highlights

We will begin with a look at history “in general” and critically analyze why it is studied, how it is studied and who decides what is studied? Students will be given tools to help them cultivate the skills needed to be social scientists, historians, and citizens. Throughout the year students will read and analyze *A Different Mirror* by Ronald Takaki. This book aims at providing an American history that centers a more inclusive multicultural context with the goal of building understanding and appreciation of the racial and cultural diversity in the U.S. Then we will explore our nation’s Constitution and the needs, struggles and tensions of nation-building. Through deliberation and debates, we will analyze competing perspectives on the role of government. We will examine the institution of slavery in our nation and its continued impact today. Through this historical context, students will question and examine the complexity around checks and balances, citizenship, individual and collective rights, and the abuse of power. From here students will begin reading *The Stories They Tell*, an in-depth look at 9/11 and the artifacts preserved and displayed in the National 9/11 Museum Memorial. Students will use multiple perspectives to examine and critically analyze how history is taught through museums, the role of museum curator, and the impact of what we choose to memorialize. From there, we will begin a research project where the students will pick a President and research what took place during their time as President and the impact the Executive branch had on the nation. Individual Farewell Address speeches will be written and delivered to their section. Next, with the help of “Facing History and Ourselves,” we will engage in the moral and ethical dilemmas of war. We will research and study genocides, violations of human rights within the United States (ex. Japanese-American incarceration), the entrance into the Nuclear Age and the changes in United States’ foreign and domestic policies. After that, we will take a close look at the issues connected

¹ Ritchhart, Ron. *Creating Cultures of Thinking: The 8 Forces We must Master to Truly Transform Our Schools*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass & Pfeiffer Imprints, Wiley, 2015. Pg. 17
to institutional changes. We will investigate the impact of Reconstruction and the Civil Rights Movement in the rights and treatment of people of color in the United States through the more personalized story of John Lewis in his graphic novels *March*. Lastly, we will examine how we memorialize events of the past in preparation for Washington, D.C. Throughout the year we will discuss, analyze and make connections to current events.

The course books include: Ronald Takaki’s *A Different Mirror for Young Adults: A History for Multicultural America*, *The Stories They Tell: Artifacts from the National September 11th Memorial Museum* and *American History* (http://www.ushistory.org/us/index.asp). Texts will be supplemented by videos, music, art, literature, discussion of current issues, various primary and secondary source readings and by *Facing History and Ourselves: Resource Book, Holocaust* and *Human Behavior*. During the Civil Rights unit, we will be reading graphic novel *March* written by John Lewis and Andrew Aydin.

Additionally, much of our course work will be enhanced through interdisciplinary studies.

**Student Evaluation**

Students will be assessed on their practice and development as thinkers, readers, listeners, writers, problem-solvers, innovators and deliberators. As learners, we will work towards proficiency with the kinds of thinking that develop our understanding of things:

- Asking questions, identifying puzzles, and wondering about the mysteries and implications of the objects and ideas of study
- Making connections, comparisons and contrasts between and among things – including connections within and across the discipline as well as with one’s own prior knowledge
- Building ongoing and evolving explanations, interpretations, and theories based on one’s ever-developing knowledge and understanding
- Examining things from different perspectives and alternative points of view to discern bias and develop a more balanced take on issues, ideas and events
- Identifying, gathering, and reasoning with evidence to justify and support one’s interpretations, predictions, theories, arguments and explanations
- Delving deeply to uncover the complexities and challenges of a topic and look below the surface of things, recognizing when one has only a surface understanding

Evaluation will be based on the process of thinking and learning in the steps towards (formative) and in the final products (summative) of reading quizzes, research papers, group projects, debates, spider-web discussions, and reflections. In short, the evaluation of students from multiple angles will help to best identify and encourage their strengths and to improve weaker areas directly.

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**MATH PLACEMENT FOR EIGHTH GRADERS**

Our 8th Grade Mathematics program features a two-course approach, with an average student-teacher ratio of just 9:1. This program – offering two interesting, diverse and vibrant Upper School-level Algebra classes (Algebra I and Algebra I+) tailored to the needs of individual students – provides all 8th graders with the personal attention, challenge and support needed to develop their mathematical thinking to the fullest.

The Middle School mathematics team completes the thoughtful process of determining which class is best suited to the needs of each student, based on the following criteria, during the summer before eighth grade. The criteria are:

- Academic achievement levels in 6th and 7th grade Mathematics (with strong E’s and A’s generally indicative of readiness for Algebra I+ placement, since Algebra I+ moves very quickly, assumes near-complete mastery of pre-algebra, and requires greater independence)
- Professional judgment of our 6th and 7th grade math teachers about a student’s mathematical aptitude, mindset and achievement level
- Ability to grasp new concepts
- Self-advocacy skills
- Demonstrated motivation and perseverance/grit
- Performance on a non-graded mathematical thinking survey administered to 7th Graders in May

As a fail-safe, in the rare event a student has been placed in a course not appropriate for them, we have the ability to move a student to the other course, following consultation with teachers, advisors, the student and parents, shortly after County Fair.

All 8th Graders study Algebra, and this two-course approach not only reduces class size greatly for every child but also enables us to provide students with the pacing, additional support, level of challenge, and opportunities for small group work best suited to their individual needs. While the Algebra I+ class moves with what is essentially an Upper School pace, the Algebra I course maintains a Middle School pace. Note that most students in both classes do move on to take an Algebra II course in 9th Grade. Placement decisions for 8th Grade Mathematics are for one-year only, with additional, separate placement processes in place for students entering 9th Grade and beyond.
Course Overview

We will be covering a variety of algebra topics at varying depths. While some topics may be for introduction, others will be focused on more heavily to achieve a certain level of mastery. Students will be working out of an algebra text and will be expected to use it as a resource of information. Major themes of the course include communicating mathematically, solving equations and inequalities (including systems), slope and graphing, exponents and polynomials, and factoring. Time permitting, we may touch on quadratics.

Goals

Students will gain the skills necessary to truly think algebraically. This entails understanding patterns and situations, modeling relations through symbols, and using algorithms and models to understand connections and the relative impact of each component on the whole. This thought will be encouraged, therefore, by promoting problem solving strategies, investigative skills and a transition from concrete to abstract thinking. Another primary goal is to have students develop their own mathematical thought and reasoning through experiencing the interconnectedness and applicability of the topics in this course and of math in aggregate.

Expectations

Students are expected to try their best and seek an appropriate challenge. Since a new method of thinking is introduced this year, students are expected to be proactive in their learning. To accomplish this, students should strive to recognize and analyze the meaning of concepts presented and seek clarification when topics are unclear. They are further expected to participate and take notes in class as well as review frequently to ensure understanding.

Student Evaluation

Grades are based on: the organization, accuracy, neatness, and completeness of the math folder; on-time completion of homework (effort-based); written work such as problems of the week (assigned in class); in-class assignments; and quizzes and tests. Everyone is expected to demonstrate understanding of the main ideas and concepts covered. Furthermore, students seeking to earn an “A” are also expected to attempt and earn credit for questions on homework and tests that require additional mastery of thought and application.
Course Overview

This course is intended for students who have mastered the introductory ideas of algebra and are ready to extend their knowledge. Students will study the following topics and their applications: linear equations and inequalities, systems of equations, absolute value inequalities, quadratic functions, properties of exponents, polynomial factoring, simplifying rational expressions solving equations, and word problems containing rational expressions and radicals.

Goals

Students will be expected to apply their understanding of patterns and situations, modeling relations through symbols, and using algorithms and models to understand connections and the impact of each component on the whole. This thought will be encouraged by promoting problem-solving strategies, investigative skills and therefore more abstract extensions. The application and implementation of these collective processes will help develop a deeper level of understanding of Algebra and aid preparation for the next course.

Expectations

The course moves at a moderately fast pace. Students may expect to see a new concept, or the extension of a previous one, in each class period. The focus will be on real-life scenarios as often as possible. Although there are many opportunities for students to work collaboratively, their progress in the course will be evaluated primarily by how well they can solve problems on their own. Students are expected to take notes and complete homework on a daily basis. The idea of self-reliance will be introduced and developed over the course of the year.

Student Evaluation

Grades are based on: the accuracy, completion and timeliness of daily homework; math binder completeness (including notes) and organization; and accuracy on quizzes and tests. Throughout the year a variety of projects will be assigned which will stretch students' thinking and require work outside of the classroom. These fun projects allow the students to go outside the typical coursework to demonstrate their mastery of concepts.
In Eighth Grade Music students work to gain a deeper and more personal understanding of music. In both band and chorus, foundational techniques in performance and musical literacy are in place, allowing students to focus on creativity and expressivity through the performance of music.

Objectives and Highlights

Students will continue to develop their knowledge of musical criteria in more complex and sophisticated ways. A greater emphasis is placed on theory and the relationship between the musical score and its performance. We include the study of the historical context of compositions. Highlights of the eighth grade curriculum include studying and performing various aspects of historical, popular music.

The eighth grade groups perform at least twice a year. The choir performs once at Vespers in December and at the Spring Music Showcase in May. The Eighth Grade Band performs at an MX in February and at the Spring Music Showcase in May. These performances serve as a final projects and, therefore, participation in these concerts is mandatory.

Student Evaluation

Students are evaluated on the basis of their effort and attitude in class, in rehearsals and in performances. Occasional musical homework music will ensure students are actively participating and engaged. Observations about each student’s initiative, cooperation, and attitude will form the basis of a student’s success in music. Students are also graded through quarterly assessments. Any concerns about a student’s work or behavior will be communicated to advisors, parents and guardians by email or phone call.
Eighth Grade Spanish
Marcie Frasz
Room 349
Ext. 5364

Course Overview

The Spanish program is a cumulative learning process that incorporates knowledge learned and skills acquired previously in the Spanish program while expanding in content, verb use, comprehension and culture. The course will continue to teach students how to understand written and spoken Spanish in the context of familiar topics and to express themselves within those topics. These topics include: health, places in the city, entertainment, and restaurant dining.

Objectives

The primary goal of this class is to continue developing the students’ ability to communicate in a meaningful way in Spanish. In addition, it is our hope to instill a sense of connection with and understanding of the many diverse cultures of Spanish-speaking people in the world. Other goals include striving to provide an environment in which world language learning is not foreign and replacing any anxiety that may occur with comfort, familiarity and confidence. In addition, students will continue to practice effective learning strategies for world language study. Overall, the course will aim to foster an interest in the study of world languages and cultures so that students will continue the process of more advanced learning in the years to come.

Highlights

The course will be taught predominantly in Spanish. Instead of relying on English-Spanish translation, the course will ease students away from the tendency to make connections to English. Visual and oral cues, props, short readings, authentic video footage, pictures, and Latin music will be utilized to reinforce language content and meaning. There will be a variety of culturally and grammatically-based ongoing individual and group projects throughout the year. Some specific projects will investigate the following topics: the presence of Hispanic heritage in the United States, important celebrations, traditions and places of Spanish-speaking cultures. Some of these include Christmas celebrations, “Las parrandas”, “La noche de San Juan” and el Morro fort. Additionally, there will be many hands-on activities which represent the historical and cultural wealth of the Hispanic world. When possible, we will integrate topics that relate to material being discussed in the students’ other classes.

Student Evaluation

Students will be asked to participate in many ways in the classroom. They will be expected to come to class prepared with all materials and a positive attitude ready to learn, to be engaged in lessons and activities, to work cooperatively with their classmates and to take ownership of their learning. A portion of their grade will take into account their class participation, including attitude, motivation, effort and progress. A variety of evaluations, such as completion of individual and group assignments,
quizzes/tests, oral interviews and self-evaluation will also be used to provide students with an awareness of individual progress.
The middle school science program focuses on these goals:

- Student can describe methods of scientific inquiry and the engineering design process and apply them to investigating, questioning and solving problems.
- Student can describe and carry out experimental procedures.
- Student can perform laboratory tasks appropriate to the field.
- Student can interpret and communicate scientific information using written, oral and/or graphical means.
- Student can describe and analyze one or more relationships among science, technology and society and demonstrate an understanding of scientific applications in everyday life.
- Student can demonstrate logical reasoning in explaining natural phenomena, experimental procedures or outcomes, and/or application of scientific or technological concepts.
- Students can describe and carry out the engineering design process.

**Course Overview**

Eighth grade science is an inquiry lab/project-based course that focuses on topics of physical science. Topics of study this year will include Engineering, Chemistry, and Physics (motion, force and energy). The curriculum is designed to develop the processes of scientific investigation, problem solving and design thinking strategies. Much of our work is done in collaborative groups. Each unit will culminate with a project that demonstrates an understanding of the new concepts. Students are encouraged to relate the new concepts and topics to their everyday world and overall interests.

**Objectives**

- To create an environment where students feel comfortable in taking risks and being actively engaged in their science learning. This would include participating in class discussions by asking questions and sharing ideas, problem-solving with the materials presented, working through labs, and even taking an exam.
- To develop in students the ability to ask, find, and determine answers to their own questions derived from their own curiosity about everyday experiences and phenomena. This would include applying various problem-solving techniques and using the engineering design process.
- To see the integration of the sciences and of science to other disciplines, including math and English.
- To develop the ability to communicate scientific concepts and explain scientific phenomena in various modalities including writing (journal, reflections, lab reports, research papers), mathematics (equations, data), oral presentations, visual (posters, models), and technology (computers and video).
• To read with understanding scientific information and to evaluate the information based on the source and methods used to generate it.

Highlights and Unique Features of this Course

Engineering – Engineers solve practical problems through the application of math, science and technology. My goal is to use engineering as a means to integrate math, science, and technology by providing relevant problems and challenges that complement the concepts and skills we are currently teaching using design thinking strategies. Each unit will include at least one engineering activity or project. Examples of some of our projects will include Rube Goldberg inventions, toothpick bridges, and robotics. We work with the STEM and coding teacher throughout the year.

Weekly Challenges – Each week students are presented with a Weekly Challenge assignment. These are always assigned on the first day of the week and are usually due the last day of the week. These challenges are designed to develop their problem solving, research and design thinking skills. They will not always relate to the topic we are studying in class but will develop the skills that we are working on.

Lab Notebook – Each student will keep a Science Lab notebook. Students will be writing all in class assignments, lab data and review questions in the lab journal. This will be used as a resource in class when working on new challenges and when taking tests. We will also be keeping an electronic design journal for their Weekly Challenges which will then become a portfolio of their work.

Science in the News – In an effort to educate ourselves on what is happening in the world of science, each month there will be current events assignments where students will search for articles on science, engineering, or technology. Student will need to select and read for understanding the article, write up the article in the assigned format, and then present for discussion the article to the class. They are encouraged to find these articles in newspapers or magazines as well as on the Internet and some will be listened to as a podcast. One requirement for this assignment will be to discuss the article with parent or another adult and then reflect upon the discussion in their write-up.

Homework and Class Notes – I will use Google Classroom to post all assignments, notes, readings and project deadlines. I encourage students to submit their work to me through Google classroom but if needed, students may hand in the assignment to me at the start of class.

Student Evaluation

Students will be asked to demonstrate their understanding of concepts and skill development in a variety of ways. Students are expected to be prepared for class, engaged and attentive in class, complete their work in a timely and thorough manner, and to be a cooperative and supportive group member. Tests/Quizzes will always allow students to use their lab notebooks. This gives students the opportunity to evaluate how effectively they are keeping up with their notes and staying organized. Students accumulate points and their final grade is based on the number of points that they have earned. Points will be deducted for late work not due to an absence. Students will have one week to complete a late assignment and then it becomes zero points.
Eighth Grade Class Trip

Bloomington, Indiana
In the fall, the eighth grade goes to Bloomington, Indiana for four days and three nights. Bloomington is known for Indiana University and its karst topography. The purpose of the trip is to provide an environment where students can get to know each other better while coming together as a cooperative and supportive group. During the day, students are divided into mixed-section groups. They are presented with experiences that will require them to face challenges, take risks, and work as a team in order to be successful. An example of one of these experiences would be our caving activity. In the evening, activities are planned for the class as a whole to socialize and have fun. Examples of our evening activities include bowling and swimming. The Indiana trip also provides the opportunity for teachers to get to know the students as well as the students to get to know their teachers.

END OF EIGHTH GRADE SECTION
**A FINAL WORD: EARLY ADOLESCENCE IN THE 21ST CENTURY**

In sustaining a Middle School program that honors and celebrates the stage of human development called *early adolescence*, Parker strives to model and curate spaces for developing empathy and identity, with countless opportunities for students to grow intellectually, personally and socially. Our Middle School faculty and staff offer all children the sense of safety and belonging they need to be themselves and engage in a process of self-discovery. Our Advisory program provides students with an adult mentor at school who helps them make sound decisions, set priorities and size-up challenges. As the parent of an early adolescent, you may consider the advisor your point person at school, collaborating with you to promote student independence, self-advocacy and the self-confidence that results from playing a larger role in problem solving and working through challenges with greater self-sufficiency. Our middle schoolers also lead full lives beyond the classroom, engaging in community service, athletics and myriad club activities that lead to the discovery of new fields, talents, friendships, mentors, contexts, issues and identities. These activities also provide opportunities for early adolescents to practice and demonstrate responsibility, citizenship (esteeming service to community above service to self), cooperation, active listening, leadership and resilience. We do everything with our middle schoolers with thoughtfulness and intention, designed and facilitated by educators who possess expertise in early adolescence and find joy in working with this unique age group.

Parker’s educational model, rooted in the rich legacy of Colonel Parker and the metaphor of school being a “Model Home,” is well-suited to middle schoolers. This model includes a diverse, inclusive and intimate school community; inspirational teachers who know their students personally and are empowered to pursue organic, authentic opportunities for teaching and learning that emerge from their students; compelling curricula that motivate students to be thoughtful, creative and engaged with enthusiasm in school and community life; and an emphasis on preparing students to embrace their responsibilities as involved citizens in a free, pluralistic and democratic society — seeking, always, to contribute to higher levels of equity and inclusion for the greater good, and committing to a lifetime of growing one's empathy and cultural competency. The Middle School years involve tremendous cognitive, physical and social changes that simultaneously excite, inspire, frustrate and unsettle early adolescents. Puberty has a way of heightening self-consciousness, disrupting friendships and encouraging various forms of rebellion (most of them healthy and necessary). While children at this stage of development are engaging in more abstract reasoning, are invigorated by positive social interaction with both peers and adults and hunger for new levels of responsibility and independence, they also crave clear boundaries, thoughtful guidance and a measure of structure that serves as a safety net for their many explorations. Knowing our students personally and maintaining close communication between school and home are important keys to the success of our program. Early adolescents seek to define more clearly their own identities—both who they are and who they aspire to be—while simultaneously facing the practical need to compromise their own wants and needs to gain acceptance to a group. And this process takes a number of years to complete, with adolescents finding a way to be true to both themselves and a community or group. Middle School exists, ultimately, so that children can practice getting what they need from the world when their parents or caregivers no longer mostly do it for them.
Early adolescents surely feel the anxieties and pressures of growing up in the 21st Century, and although it can be hard to maintain perspective, it remains true that the ideal environment for promoting growth has optimism and joyfulness; enthusiastic engagement without the crippling fear of failure; the safety and freedom to be one’s authentic self while helping those around us do the same; the development of cultural competency so we all come to understand and appreciate our own complex identities and contexts and those of others unlike us; creative, collaborative and meaningful intellectual discourse; perseverance and resilience as primary values and omnipresent goals; and a shared vigorous commitment to sustaining a community that strives with fervor to be the most equitable for all—especially when it’s hard and when no one is quite certain what to do. Although there are times doing something (anything?) may help us as adults feel better, pressure, perfectionism, competition, high-stakes testing and a focus on grades stunt growth and limit a child’s opportunities to succeed, rather than expand them. It is, therefore, in those inevitable moments of anxiety, frustration or pain that we most need to seek and name the joy as a means of maintaining perspective while helping our middle schoolers learn to do the same. Ultimately, there is no greater gift we can give early adolescents than the liberating gift of perspective. And there is no greater purpose for the open, honest and respectful collaboration between parents and educators than helping one another develop and sustain our own long-term perspective for the benefit of the children. Educated, enthusiastic and engaged citizens who are intellectually curious, analytical and creative in their thinking; inclusive, empathetic and dedicated to working up to their full potential, not merely for personal gain but for the purpose of making positive, meaningful and lasting contributions to their communities—these are the primary qualities we seek to nurture and reinforce in all Middle School students at Parker.