

# Buckingham, Browne & Nichols Middle School



**2024-25  
PROGRAM GUIDE**



## **BB&N Middle School Program Guide**

Buckingham Browne & Nichols Middle School provides a safe learning environment for middle school students by offering a dynamic program that both challenges and nurtures the intellectual, emotional, moral, and artistic growth of our students. We recognize that middle school students are in the midst of rapid and profound changes intellectually, physically, and emotionally, and with an integrated Advisory Program, we have developed a unique program to meet their specific developmental needs. Our Motto: Honor, Scholarship, and Kindness highlights the guiding principles central to our program.

Through a thoughtful and engaging curriculum, we encourage students to develop a sense of identity, curiosity, purpose, independence, and critical thinking skills. We strive to engage students in their own learning so they come to know and understand themselves both as individuals and members of the larger community and world. By learning to take risks and make mistakes, our students begin to stretch themselves beyond their comfort zone and develop both courage and resilience within themselves. Over time, our students also work to develop skills of both self-advocacy and time management.

Our core academic program is organized around six departments with guiding themes and goals interwoven throughout. In this Program Guide, you'll find detailed departmental descriptions. Our Advisory Program is interactive and creates opportunities for students to engage and connect in small groups around issues of social justice, identity development, respect, and inclusion.

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## ***BB&N Mission & Core Values***

BB&N is an academically excellent, diverse, and inclusive community where students develop into lifelong learners who lead with kindness, curiosity, and integrity. We prepare students to be responsible and open-minded as they engage with the world around them.

Core Values: Inquiry, Integrity, Belonging, and Kindness

- We promote curiosity and critical thinking to inspire a lifelong love of learning.
- We strive to be honest, conscientious, and accountable in our actions even when no one is watching.
- We foster a culture of respect, well-being, and connection that values all individuals and empowers them to discover and be their authentic selves.
- We strengthen our communities by recognizing our common humanity and treating ourselves and others with respect and compassion.



## ***DEIG Commitments***

- **Equitable Learning:** Leveraging anti-racist, anti-bias, culturally responsive pedagogy and practices that provide equitable learning opportunities for all community members.
- **Meaningful Relationships:** Building meaningful relationships with inquiry, intention, and compassion.
- **Transparency:** Acting with transparency and accountability that support lasting systemic change.
- **Self-Reflection:** Fostering a practice of critical self-reflection that invites individual and communal examination of our position, power, and privilege.
- **Engagement:** Pursuing equity for all through exploring multiple perspectives, active solidarity, and community engagement.

# ***MS Community Expectations***

As members of our Sparks Street Community, we affirm and abide by the *BB&N Community Standards\** and values through our Motto: *Honor, Scholarship & Kindness*. We take pride in being a **BB&N Knight** and our Community.

## **How can we think beyond ourselves?**

- How do our words, choices, and actions impact ourselves and others?
- What's the right thing to do - even when no one is watching?

At the Middle School, we use these categories to center our core principles and values each day. In the beginning of the year, our *MS Community Expectations* shown below are shared in context and reviewed as our *MS Community Expectations Doc (CED)*. This document is signed by both students and parents/guardians.



## **HONOR:**

**As a BB&N Middle School Knight, I will...**

- Tell the truth
- Do the right thing, even when no one is watching
- Consider intent vs. impact
- Respect our teachers, staff, fellow students, and classmates as well as the school spaces and rules
- Take responsibility for my words and actions, be an upstander, and use one of the 5Ds to support an inclusive and kind community



## **SCHOLARSHIP:**

**As a BB&N Middle School Knight, I will...**

- Take an active role in my own learning; practice self-advocacy
- Develop curiosity and inquiry
- Consider intent vs. impact.
- Arrive prepared for class, on time with a positive growth mindset, homework, materials, and a charged laptop
- Do my own work with pride and do not submit work that is not my own; abide by the AHP and TUP



## **KINDNESS:**

**As a BB&N Middle School Knight, I will...**

- Respect and support our community members to be their authentic selves
- Be kind and inclusive
- Consider intent vs. impact.
- Treat others the way they would like to be treated

*\* Found in the Student Family Handbook online.*

## ENGLISH

In English we will use the essential questions below to explore identity and ground our reading, writing, and discussion. These essential questions connect directly to the Learning for Justice Social Justice Standards.

- How does one's perspective or individual and group identities change or inform their understanding of the world around them? (Identity)
- What can literature's "windows and mirrors" reveal to us about characters, our individual identity, our diverse community, and the world? (Diversity)
- How does power (or lack thereof) shape people's lives and inform their understanding of justice? (Justice)
- What tools does an author use to create a unique narrative and voice, and how can we use these tools to inspire our voices and lead us to be change-makers? (Action)

## GRADE 7

In seventh grade students practice becoming creative, curious, and confident English students. Reading and writing well is hard work. It is essential that students slow down, demonstrate persistence, give and receive feedback, and take advantage of revisions. Students read literature from a wide variety of genres, and our aim is always to examine language closely and appreciate its artistry. Students write frequently. We emphasize thorough idea development, organization, and precision of expression. Throughout the year, students will practice and deepen their close reading and analytic skills by studying and considering thematic ideas in short stories, novels, and poems.

### Skills

Seventh-grade English students develop skills in order to be effective readers, writers, and communicators. Short-term assignments, frequent reading quizzes, and an emphasis on class participation help students to practice careful and prompt preparation. Long-term writing assignments and more open-ended projects allow students to explore their creativity while they learn to plan and execute their ideas responsibly. Students will also refine grammar skills and build vocabulary in context through writing revisions. Weekly assignment sheets, Canvas, and Google Classroom help students organize their time and work.

### Reading

Students study short stories, poems, and novels. Through class discussion and activities and their own writing, students analyze authors' choices. Students practice and deepen their close reading and analytic skills and seek to uncover and consider underlying thematic ideas in each work. In addition to close reading and exploration of thematic ideas, activities include frequent writing, both imaginative and analytic, and project work.

### Writing

Students write frequently and practice their writing skills in a variety of genres, including creative non-fiction, memoir, poetry, and formal responses to the reading. During seventh grade we begin to lay the groundwork for more analytical, persuasive essays. We value precision in language, thoughtful structure, and thorough idea development. We also emphasize correct

spelling and punctuation. Throughout the year, students engage in longer writing assignments culminating in the Voices Sketchbook, a long term personal creative writing project.

### **Anticipated Texts**

Summer Reading Selection

*Look Both Ways*

*Troublemaker*

*The Outsiders*

*Animal Farm*

*Before We Were Free*

*Voices Sketchbook Reader*

## **GRADE 7**

Equipped with close reading skills from the seventh-grade curriculum, eighth-grade English students consider ideas in increasingly abstract terms and make exciting leaps in understanding relationships within and between readings. Students read literature from a wide variety of genres, and our aim is always to examine language closely and appreciate its artistry. Students write frequently. We emphasize thorough idea development, organization, and precision of expression. Throughout the year, students will practice and deepen their close reading and analytic skills by studying and considering thematic ideas in short stories, novels, and poems. Students learn to develop flexibility in seeing readings as discrete pieces and in making connections between pieces, to generalize, and to think comparatively. Through discussion, writings, and activities, students find parallels within literature and between these works and their own lives.

### **Skills**

Short-term assignments, frequent reading quizzes, and an emphasis on class participation help students to build confidence in their developing reading, writing, and thinking skills. Long-term writing assignments and more open-ended projects allow students to explore their creativity while they learn to plan and execute their ideas effectively. Weekly assignment sheets, Canvas, and Google Classroom help students organize their time and work. Students will also refine grammar skills and build vocabulary in context through writing revisions.

Class time is devoted to discussion, group work, writing workshops and peer editing, short writing exercises, grammatical analysis, and other activities that provide students with a variety of strategies to hone their reading, writing, and thinking skills.

### **Reading**

Building on the foundational skills established in seventh grade, students study a variety of genres including short stories, poems, novels, nonfiction selections, and a play. Through class discussion and activities and their own writing, students analyze the authors' choices. Students practice and deepen their close reading and analytical skills and seek to uncover and consider underlying thematic ideas in each work.

### **Writing**

Students write frequently and practice their writing skills in a variety of genres, including fiction, memoir, poetry, and analytical writing. Writing assignments range from formal to informal

reading responses. We hope to extend the power of the expression of their ideas as we introduce the beginning strategies and conventions of analytical essay writing. Writing assignments, whether stories, poems, paragraphs, or essays are designed to teach each student the potential of their own voice when language is used thoughtfully, effectively, and precisely. Through frequent assignments, including a ten-page story project, in-class workshops, revisions, as well as teacher and peer evaluations, students practice honing their voices and expressing their rich imaginations on the page.

**Anticipated Texts**

*The Rock and the River*

*A Midsummer Night's Dream*

*Short Story Reader*, anthology

*12 Angry Men*

# HISTORY

## GRADE 7

Several integrated and interrelated units comprise the study of Latin America during the seventh grade year. The goals of the program are to examine the elements which make up social science and history, and to develop relevant study skills while using Latin America as the focus. This course begins our two-year study of the Western Hemisphere.

### Overview of Topics

- What is Latin America?
- Geography of Latin America
- Indigenous Civilizations
- European Colonization
- Latin America Today
- Country Project(s)

### Skills

- Time management/organizing/sequencing
- Summarizing and reporting current events
- Basic 5-paragraph essay form
- Memorization techniques
- Subject Identifications
- Library/Internet skills and research
- Formatted note-taking techniques
- Debate and other discussion techniques
- Crafting a website in February and other country project work throughout the year.

### Topical Details

- What is Latin America? After an introduction to Latin America we discuss Enrique's Journey, issues of immigration, and current events.
- Students learn the physical geography of Latin America.
- Indigenous Cultures and Civilizations: This unit encompasses the history of the Americas before European contact. We focus on the Maya and Aztec civilizations as well as the Olmec, Inca and Taino/Arawak.
- European Contact: Students explore the effects of contact and settlement by Europeans to what is now Latin America: Columbus and the Tainos, Cortes and the Aztecs, Pizarro and the Incas. We look at the themes of Colonial History, Viceregal Rule and the Catholic Church, including the perspectives of the less advantaged, particularly women and Native Americans. The unit ends with the study of independence movements: L'Ouverture in Haiti, Bolivar and San Martin in the Spanish colonies, and Dom Pedro in Brazil. An in-depth study of Mexico follows, from Hidalgo through the modern day.
- Country Project: students choose countries and begin research to present their countries in different ways over the course of the year. Projects include, creating maps and flags, gathering and comparing social and economic data, writing paragraphs, and constructing a comprehensive website.



- Contemporary Latin America: In this unit we review modern Latin America. Students learn about current issues, urban vs. rural lifestyles, and Latin American relations with the United States.

### **Texts and Other Resource Materials**

*Enrique's Journey*, Sonia Nozario

Department-generated reader (over 200 pages of faculty developed text)

Internet/print news reading

## **GRADE 8**

Eighth graders examine perspective and the relationships between events in history. The goal is to create hypotheses in both the written and spoken word, and to be able to support and communicate ideas persuasively. The study of the United States completes the students' two year study of political and physical geography of the Western Hemisphere.

### **Overview of Topics**

- Early human settlement in North America
- Indigenous Nations and acknowledging land rights
- What happened when European colonists arrived?
- Colonial America case studies of power, race, wealth and religion
- Formation of United States Government
- U.S. Government and Current Events
- Expanding our view beyond the United States with a Model UN simulation to end the year

### **Skill Development**

- Recognizing bias and perspective
- Supporting ideas with evidence
- Relating events over time and space
- Debating viewpoints in class
- Increasing note taking speed, accuracy, and utility
- Presenting research to the class
- Writing thesis statements and supporting them with evidence
- Wrestling with current events and world issues

### **Topical Details**

- Current Events: Though much of our curricular work focuses on people, places and events from long ago, we consistently keep our finger on the pulse of current events in the United States and beyond. Students maintain digital journals which explore their personal reactions to recent events.
- Early Americans: Students examine evidence which explains how the first settlers arrived. We learn North American geography and see how climate and geography affected the cultures of early Native American groups. We explore Nation building and conduct Land Acknowledgements.

- European Arrival: Students then learn of conditions in Tudor England which culminated in early English settlement to North America and created divergent paths within that migration. We consider the places of Native Americans, African Americans, women and indentured servants in the 1600's and early English colonial society. Throughout this unit, we re-read much of their summer reading book *Stamped: Racism, Antiracism, and You* by Jason Reynolds.
- United States Government: Students explore the evolution of the United States Government, from the break with England to contemporary politics and issues. We play a simulation game ("Disunia") which uses the Articles of Confederation as rules for a working congress. Students experience the need for "new rules", i.e. The Constitution. We examine the Executive, Legislative, and Judicial branches, write letters to Congress, and explore the reasons for the 27 Amendments. Students examine Supreme Court landmark cases involving civil rights and young people.
- Model UN: We end the year by learning how other governments around the world work and the challenges and hopes that come with global cooperation. Students will learn about a chosen country and then work together as an entire eighth grade to solve a significant global problem via a Model UN simulation.

### **Texts and Other Materials**

Department-generated reader

*Stamped: Racism, Antiracism, and You* by Jason Reynolds.

The Constitution, Scott Foresman Co.

## SCIENCE

At BB&N, the science program instills a deep curiosity about how the world works and how scientific content and skills can be applied in context. Emphasizing collaboration and hands-on, inquiry-based learning, the curriculum focuses on scientific problem-solving, critical thinking, and the development of essential scientific skills. Across all three campuses, students are encouraged to transition from concrete to abstract thinking, which builds confidence, independence, and a systematic approach to scientific exploration. The program encourages students to engage meaningfully with the world and to think critically about their role in it, including themes such as sustainable development, climate change, and other global challenges.

We recognize that, developmentally, the seventh and eighth grade are years when students are transitioning from concrete to more abstract thinking, and each student is doing this at their own pace. Our classes are designed with this in mind, and we develop our curriculum to address multiple styles of learning. We hope that students leaving the Middle School science program are positive, proactive, productive, confident, and competent learners; we expect that students will gain confidence in approaching problems creatively, collaborating effectively, and working independently.

The science program at the Middle School familiarizes students with laboratory science skills and emphasizes the importance of mastering the processes, skills, and vocabulary of the physical sciences. Through our work together, students develop strong study and collaboration skills as well as a framework for approaching novel ideas and experiences. Academic and science skills that are introduced and then assessed throughout the year in science include: effective class engagement, thoughtful and thorough assignment completion, processing and following directions, working independently and in group settings, quiz/test preparation and performance, and thorough record keeping in logbooks.

## GRADE 7

In Science 7, students explore a variety of topics related to physics, energy, and the scientific method. Each unit incorporates hands-on experiences, whereby students are able to investigate new topics as well as to apply the skills and concepts learned. The first unit serves as the foundation for the study of science in the Middle School. Students study measurements, scientific methods, graphing, and data analysis through a variety of short experiments. Students then make use of the skills learned in this first unit to explore topics in energy as well as forces and motion, with an emphasis on understanding the science and how it relates to their lives through the exploration of various applications. Design challenges are incorporated into each unit to provide students with an opportunity for creative and collaborative problem-solving, and, where appropriate, students are introduced to problem-solving using mathematical equations. At various points throughout the year, students will engage in cross-curriculum work that seeks to broaden their experience and understanding of the world around them; for example, through the Penguin Palace project, students learn about building methods and resources available in the country they study for their Latin America project in history class and then build an insulated structure with the goal of minimizing loss of mass in an ice penguin. The year culminates with the Roller Coaster project, a creative design challenge, which capitalizes on the seventh graders'

newly developed understanding and knowledge of energy, forces, and motion, to create a gravity-assisted marble run, complete with exciting embellishments such as jumps, loop-de-loops, and switchbacks.

### **Resource Materials**

- Science 7 Unit Packets, created and distributed by the Middle School Science Department
- Science pages on Canvas
- CK-12 Physical Science for Middle School, a supplemental online textbook
- Assorted readings from e-books accessible via BB&N Middle School Library website

## **GRADE 8**

Science 8 serves as an introduction to topics in chemistry: classification of matter, atomic structure, periodic table, chemical bonding, chemical reactions, and acids and bases. It is a lab-centered program in which the experiments are designed to further develop laboratory skills and techniques. Accompanying each unit is an investigation or series of activities designed to showcase an application of chemistry and a round table discussion on additional topics to expose students to a wider variety of applications. Past explorations have included: polymers, forensics, color and pyrotechnics, toxins/poisons/venoms, water filtration, art & minerals, food science, and ocean acidification. In the spring, students will study one of the application topics in greater depth, exploring a topic of their own choosing. At Science Knight on Friday, May 9 at 6:30 pm, the eighth graders will present their research along with interactive demonstrations, hands-on activities, and prototypes of “inventions for the future” designed to help further one of the UN’s sustainable development goals. This evening event is required for all eighth graders, and the entire BB&N community is welcome to attend.

### **Resource Materials**

- Science 8 Unit Packets, created and distributed by the Middle School Science Department
- Science pages on Canvas
- CK-12 Physical Science for Middle School, a supplemental online textbook
- Assorted readings from e-books accessible via BB&N Middle School Library website

## WORLD LANGUAGES

The world language curriculum at the Middle School introduces a formal program of language learning. In each of the two-year sequences in **French, Latin, and Spanish**, students complete an intense High School level I course. Each language is learned within a cultural context; students therefore gain understanding and respect for different societies, past and present.

### Skills

- Seeing the patterns of language
- Recognizing and understanding grammatical structure
- Manipulating elements of the language to form sentences
- Memorizing effectively
- Understanding the essential meaning without translating every word
- Recognizing meaning through cognates
- Understanding the cumulative nature of language learning

In French and Spanish, students develop a comprehensive foundation in the language. Students master fundamental grammar concepts, build essential vocabulary, and learn idiomatic expressions that enable them to use the target language spontaneously and authentically in speaking, reading, writing, and aural comprehension. Learning to communicate confidently in Spanish on a basic level is a priority.

In Latin, students concentrate not only on the vocabulary and syntax of formal Latin but also on language structure in general and its relation to English grammar. English vocabulary building and Latin expressions used in English are an integral part of the course. We teach vocabulary, translation through reading, and how to work in the language without knowing every word. Roman history and culture will be taught through readings, activities, and projects. In the spring, students participate in the National Latin Exam at the Introduction to Latin level (7th grade) and Beginner level (8th grade).

### Texts and Other Materials

#### French

Grade 7 D'Accord (Vista Higher Learning) in addition to an in-house publication

Grade 8

#### Latin

Grade 7 & 8 The students receive an in-house publication.

#### Spanish

Grade 7 & 8 Descubre (Vista Higher Learning) in addition to an in-house publication.

### Language 83 (Offered as needed)

Because of the cumulative nature of language acquisition, it is vital that each student have a solid foundation on which to build. Therefore, any 8th-grade student, who for whatever reason does not have a solid command of our 7th-grade curriculum in French, Latin, or Spanish, will be

placed in Language 83. (Placement in this course is only by recommendation from the school) In this course not only is a specific language taught, but also the skills necessary for successful language acquisition are emphasized. The language used for this course rotates; for example, 2018-2019 Latin, 2019-2020 Arabic, and 2020-2021 Latin.

*Please note:* This course does not complete the requirements of a first-year language class. This is a one-year course with no continuing level at the Upper School. Typically, the students who are enrolled in this course begin 9th grade in the Upper School with Level I of one of the languages offered at the Upper School – Arabic, Chinese, French, Latin, Russian, or Spanish.

## ARTS

In the Middle School, a vibrant Arts program features experiential courses where each student is taught to recognize, trust and express their unique creative instincts. Students are exposed to both performance and visual arts where each faculty member teaches the technical skills as well as a conceptual understanding of their medium. Individual, non-linear thought is encouraged while students grow to understand the language of each art form. Students take ownership of their work through in-class presentations where growth is assessed through critiques or written evaluations. Students' work then becomes an integral part of the school community through performance and display.

### GRADE 7

Students rotate through drama, music, three-dimensional, and two-dimensional art in quarterly cycles, each class meeting four times per week.

#### VISUAL ARTS

##### **Ceramics/Three-Dimensional Art**

The Ceramics program at the Middle School aims to create a relaxing and supportive environment to explore three-dimensional art using hand-building clay techniques. Each class begins with a reflective prompt where students respond in clay, then share their creations to build our classroom community. Students learn ceramic building techniques and surface design techniques. They also learn about different kinds of clay & glazing options as well as firing processes. Personal expression, constructive feedback, and respectful interactions are always emphasized. Finally, contemporary and historical ceramics from various cultures are explored throughout the projects to give a basic knowledge of their importance and context for ceramics today.

##### **Two-Dimensional Art**

Two-Dimensional Art in the 7th grade is an introductory class structured around the study of the Elements of Art, which are the fundamental concepts for understanding and creating visual work. Through video resources, exposure to a variety of artist exemplars, class discussions, and a diverse range of hands-on activities, students gain a deeper understanding of how artists use the Elements even as they explore their own artistry. Students also engage in daily journal drawings as a way to develop their creative sensibilities and visual intelligence. The culminating project allows students to apply their knowledge of the Elements in a personally meaningful way.

#### PERFORMING ARTS

##### **Drama**

7th Grade Drama is an introduction to theatre performance. Classes focus on improvisation that will help students trust and access their creative instincts on the stage. Students create scenes and characters based on their own experiences and discuss the ways in which art relates to everyday life. Emphasis is given to learning to be supportive members of a creative group, on understanding compassion as an essential acting tool, and on the role of Theater in the community, past and present.

## **Music**

7th Grade General Music is a skill building class that also develops prerequisite skills for 8th grade elective classes. Students study and practice rhythmic concepts, such as meter and time signatures, as well as musical information such as tempo, dynamic and articulation markings. As we bring pitch into the picture, all of the aforementioned skills are translated into musical notation. These skills and ability to utilize notation are reinforced with an original composition project, as well as singing and playing a variety of musical instruments. Lastly, students build their broader musicianship skills (such as ear training, understanding of musical form and analysis) by familiarizing themselves with multiple genres of music.

## **GRADE 8**

Eighth graders are ready for concentrated immersion in two semester-long arts courses, which meet four times per week. Exposure to a wide variety of artistic expression in the Middle School helps students discover an area in which they can flourish. Students indicate their interests at the end of grade 7 and the Arts Department places the students in visual and/or performance arts courses for each semester.

### **VISUAL ARTS**

#### **Ceramics: Wheel Thrown Pottery**

In 8th-grade ceramics, students are introduced to a calm and creative space to explore three-dimensional ceramic art. This class fosters a supportive atmosphere where individual expression is encouraged. The focus of this class is on teaching students how to use the pottery wheel in order to create functional pieces, such as mugs, plates, and bowls. Students will also be introduced to a variety of surface design methods to enhance their work. The course emphasizes both the visual qualities of form and surface, offering a thorough understanding of different types of clay and glazes, as well as the various firing techniques used. Personal expression, constructive critique, and respectful collaboration are central to the learning process. Additionally, students will study the rich history and significance of ceramics from different cultures, linking their work to broader artistic traditions and contemporary practices.

#### **Ceramics: Functional Dinnerware Pottery with Surface Design & Hand-built Sculpture**

In 8th-grade ceramics, students are immersed in a calming environment that encourages the exploration of both functional and sculptural ceramics. Together, we build a community that nurtures personal expression through the creation of three-dimensional art. One elective focuses on making everyday objects that we can use like mugs, plates, and bowls, while also introducing various surface design techniques. The other elective, Ceramics Sculpture, is dedicated to larger-scale sculptural projects, such as animals, expressive vessels, and boats, with opportunities to explore more advanced surface design. A key aspect of these classes is the balance between form and surface, with an emphasis on art's potential to inspire social change. Students also dive deeper into the properties of different clay bodies and glazes, learning a range of firing processes. Constructive feedback, personal growth, and mutual respect are central to the experience. Throughout the course, students explore both modern and historical ceramics from diverse cultures, providing context for how ceramics fits into today's artistic landscape.



### **Sketchbook**

Two-Dimensional Art in the 8th grade builds upon the concepts and experiences of the 7th grade class as students engage in a more personal approach to artmaking. A sketchbook serves as the primary place where students explore skills, media, and artistic processes and also experiment with ideas, styles, and personal expression. Students will have opportunities to create work that ranges from literal, technique-driven representations to symbolic, conceptual ways of thinking, to even abstract and non-representational visualizations. The emphasis of the class is on engaging in the artistic process in a thoughtful manner, developing one's ideas with clarity and depth, demonstrating personal growth, creative problem-solving, and contributing to a positive and productive learning environment.

### **Comic Arts**

The Comic Arts Class is an exploration of visual storytelling as an artform. Students will learn to develop narrative elements such as character, plot, setting, composition, and text as they also develop their own sense of style. Students will work individually and collaboratively to develop single short stories, longer narratives, stop-motion animation, and "fine art" inspired by the comics genre. The emphasis of the class is on engaging in the artistic process in a thoughtful manner, developing one's ideas with clarity and depth, demonstrating personal growth, creative problem-solving, and contributing to a positive and productive learning environment.

### **Drawing and Painting**

The Drawing and Painting Class is designed to give students hands-on experiences with the artistic process as they explore imagery and meaning based on a theme of personal significance. Students have the opportunity to create five major projects, through which they explore skills of observational drawing, expressive use of color, collage and stenciling, LED light-enhancement, and acrylic painting. The emphasis of the class is on engaging in the artistic process in a thoughtful manner, developing one's ideas with clarity and depth, demonstrating personal growth, creative problem-solving, and contributing to a positive and productive learning environment.

### **Design and Fabrication**

This 8th grade elective course will emphasize design thinking and the engineering design process in order to complete projects that make use of multiple fabrication machines and tools. We will focus on 2D + 3D design and physical computing (electronics + programming). Students will combine their knowledge across machines and disciplines, develop in giving and receiving feedback in order to improve their work, take risks, and embrace failure as a learning opportunity. Students will maintain a portfolio including design notes, prototypes, feedback, final products, and reflection

## **PERFORMING ARTS**

### **Filmmaking Class**

The class will write, direct, and star in several short films. The class will culminate in a "Film Premier Night" for friends and family via an online platform. Students will view past student films, learn the craft of screenplay writing, study the use of camera shots, learn acting for the camera and learn editing skills.

### **Musical Composition**

Students will explore advanced skills in musical notation and harmonic theory in order to write their own instrumental pieces and songs. They will work on creating their own individual style by composing original melodies and adding harmonic elements. The class will explore musical styles throughout history in the standard music practice as a way of learning elements of musical style and composition. The class will explore lyric writing through a study of song compositions. Classical and modern forms will be used as models that the students can adapt. Each student will compile a portfolio of their musical compositions. For student instrumentalists, there is the possibility of in-class performances.

### **Rock'n Roll Is Here To Stay: A History of Rock and Roll**

The Rock History class is an exploration of Rock Music set firmly within the context of 20th century American history. In addition to discussing historical content in each decade, the class discussion often includes the themes of race, gender, sexual identity, and socio-economic class. The course examines the roots and influences of Rock, including Blues, Spirituals and Gospel, Boogie Woogie, Swing, Rhythm and Blues, Doo Wop, Country, Jump Blues and Rockabilly as precursors to Rock and Roll. Rock topics may include: the role of Elvis Presley, 1955-1959, Early 60's and dances, Surf music, the Beatles, the British Invasion, Protest music, soul, Monterey, Woodstock and the Festivals, Jimi Hendrix and Janis Joplin, 70's, Prog Rock, Disco, Rap and other genres. Special attention is paid to the role of media in the development of rock, the business of music, and technological developments, such as the development of recorded sound, and the development of instruments such as electric guitars and amplifiers. Student activities may include Fantasy Rock Band, the culminating event of the semester where students draft their own rock band and take it on the road. Each class progresses at its own pace and generally covers music from 1920-1980.

### **8th Grade Musical**

This class mounts a fully staged musical production from the Broadway repertoire. Students work together on the following musical theatre skills: in-depth character development; interpreting text through acting, music and movement; vocal expression and healthy stage vocal technique; vocal coaching; understanding the rehearsal process; tools and techniques for the stage; stagecraft and design, prop and costume design; choreography. Some students will fill the positions of stage manager, lighting technician and crew, learning the appropriate skills for the position.

### **Drama Festival Play/Spring Play**

Students may perform at the METG Middle School Drama Festival in person or via live streaming. Throughout the rehearsal process students will explore in-depth character creation and script analysis, develop characters through voice, movement and personal history, understand the rehearsal process, learn performance technique and have the experience of being part of an acting ensemble.

### **PERFORMING ENSEMBLES**

Students may elect to participate in several performance ensembles. These groups, Chamber Music, Jazz Band, Chorus, and the BB&N Players give students the opportunity to use their talents outside of the classroom and perform at community events.

### **Chorus**

The Chorus is open to all students who enjoy singing. Chorus performs at Winterfest and the Spring Concert, but may also perform at assemblies and at other special occasions. The literature of Chorus ranges from classical to Broadway, from classic Rock and Roll to contemporary, with the accent on fine arrangements suitable for middle school voices. All music is in the form of choral octavos from two to four parts. Student interest or special areas of expertise will often be taken into account when choosing the repertoire of Chorus. Emphasis includes vocal hygiene and basic technical skills, posture, accuracy of pitch, enjoyment of singing, and a commitment to the group process and rehearsal skills.

### **Jazz Band**

Jazz Band is offered to 7th and 8th grade students by audition. No previous experience in playing jazz is required. The aim of this class is to explore this unique American art form, characterized by complex, syncopated rhythm and improvisations. Students learn to interpret traditional notation and make it “swing” and to improvise melodies. Through this course students experience a spirited aspect of American culture, are challenged by new musical concepts and work at developing their own risk-taking skills.

### **Chamber Ensembles**

The Chamber Music program at the Middle School is designed to give students the opportunity to learn the art of ensemble playing. An elective offering for students with some experience in playing a musical instrument, the program tries to be flexible to accommodate students with a broad range of musical backgrounds. Acceptance into the class is based on ability, numbers of students, and instrumentation.

### **The BB&N Players**

The BB&N Players, an Improv Troupe, is part of the BB&N Community. The troupe assists the school in many ways including serving as assembly emcees and assisting faculty with skits for various school events such as the read-a-thon, community service and sports assemblies.

## MATH

A student's math experience at the Middle School is guided by 5 self-reflective questions:

1. Am I willing to make mistakes and ask questions in order to learn?
2. When I solve a problem, do I understand the “why” behind each step?
3. Is there more than one way to solve the problem, and if so, how do I decide which strategy to use?
4. How can I show or explain my work in a way that others can understand?
5. Is my answer reasonable? Is there a way to know if I'm right?

These questions are posted in each math classroom and are designed to encourage students to be active thinkers rather than passive recipients.

7th graders use the *Grade 7 Accelerated* math program by Open Up Resources and selected complementary lessons from the Desmos Classroom 7th grade and 8th grade math programs.

### **7th-grade topics include:**

- Rigid Transformations
- Scaled Drawings
- Similarity
- Slope
- Writing and Solving Equations
- Inequalities
- Expressions and Equations
- Linear Relationships
- Functions and Volume
- Exponents and Scientific Notation

8th graders use *i* (also published by Open Up Resources) and selected complementary lessons from the Desmos Classroom 8th grade and Algebra 1 math programs.

### **8th-grade topics include:**

- Arithmetic and Geometric Sequences
- Linear and Exponential Functions
- Function Notation
- Equations and Inequalities
- Systems of Equations and Inequalities
- Pythagorean Theorem & Irrational Numbers
- Features of Quadratic Functions
- Solving Quadratic Equations
- Modeling Data

All students have the opportunity to participate in the Math Olympiads during class. We also offer a math club that meets weekly after school and participates in a wider array of competitions and activities. In addition, we invite the Girls' Angle math organization to run two Girls' Math Collaboration after-school events every year (typically in between athletic seasons). All eighth grade students participate in The Stock Market Game, sponsored by The SIFMA Foundation, as part of a mini-unit on financial literacy.

BB&N's Middle School program includes advanced classes that cover the same topics as the standard classes, but in greater depth and complexity. Enrollment in both seventh and eighth grade is based on multiple factors. These factors include numerical measures such as scores on common assessments and semester grades. They also include holistic measures such as the teacher's assessment of productive classroom participation, homework and study habits, mastery of prerequisite skills, curiosity, and comfort with uncertainty. Final authority for placement rests with the Math Department. However, we remain flexible in our decision-making process. If appropriate, we will change a student's placement during the school year, or between school years.

On rare occasions, it is appropriate for a student to accelerate through the math curriculum. This is only done between eighth and ninth grade with the approval of the Math Department. It involves self-directed summer study of school-provided materials followed by an exam before the start of the ninth grade year. Students interested in pursuing this option should inform their eighth grade math teacher who will then connect them to the appropriate people and resources at the Upper School.

## **ADVISORY PROGRAM**

Our MS Advisory has a two-year character development program. The Advisory Program consists of two parts: the advisor-advisee relationship and the advisory co-curriculum. Programming is led weekly by Advisors through Homerooms and also by grade and school-wide activities. This structure includes social emotional learning and provides support and activities to build community and foster a sense of belonging. Content addresses topics such as friendship, teamwork, identity, leadership, academic organization.

### **Program Goals**

- Provide a home base for students to nurture community and build connections
- Establish the Advisor as the key contact person for student and family
- Improve students' social-emotional skills, attitudes about self and others.
- Support students' academic performance and nurture a positive growth mindset
- Prepare young people for success by building skills in communication and collaboration
- Strengthen students' sense of self and role and responsibility within in a group to understand potential contributions and impact

### **Advisor-Advisee Relationship**

Each student is matched with an Advisor, who is also a Middle School faculty member. The Advisor is the key point person for the student and their family for anything related to their experience at the Middle School. Supporting students is a team effort and students and Advisors alike are also supported by Grade Deans and Specialists such as the Learning Specialists, Counselor and Nurse.

Advisors meet with their advisee group every morning in Homeroom. The primary purpose of Homeroom is to give each student a place to land and begin their school day with calmness, kindness and connection. Advisors get to know their advisees often through multiple intersections such as being their academic teacher, athletic coach, club leader, etc.

### **Advisory Explorations**

During daily Homeroom gatherings, Advisors prioritize connection and competency for the day by following a set, predictable structure each morning consisting of a greeting, announcements, and time to reflect and share in small pairs and as a group around a determined purpose. By doing so, we are working to create positive energy, engagement and feelings of mutual respect and belonging.

Some recent examples of Explorations include:

- Regular ice-breaker games to get to know each other in fun ways
- Reflection and invitation to share parts of our identity
- What does it mean to be a good friend and how to identify healthy friendship characteristics
- What kind of leader are you

Another example is the school's commitment to Community Service Learning in which students are supported to learn more about themselves personally, their communities and connections and ways to be intentional and supportive of putting empathy into action.

Beginning with Orientation and continuing throughout the school year, the 7th grade curriculum focuses on fostering a sense of belonging with peers, to a student's homeroom, the school, and the outside community. Activities are also designed to give students the support, academic and otherwise, needed to navigate effectively through the complexities of middle school life. In the eighth grade, Advisors work with students to develop leadership skills, foster independence and self-advocacy skills and continue to explore aspects of leadership.

## **ADDITIONAL MIDDLE SCHOOL PROGRAMMING**

### **E BLOCK**

Learning to make good choices and managing time are important skills and habits. E Block generally meets in the middle of each day after lunch. It is an “open” time in the schedule and is designed to support student growth by introducing both responsibility and choice time. In the beginning of the year, this is time used in Homeroom. Advisors then transition students to an E Block Tracking System to provide structure for making productive use and choices for this valuable time. Students should use this time to connect with available teachers for extra help, to make-up work during office hours and/or to get homework done. We strive to model for students that connecting with teachers and advisors outside of class can strengthen understanding and build opportunities for success. If students are not sure when or how to connect with teachers, they should be sure to ask. Students must check in with their advisor about their plan for each E block for at least the first quarter of the year. Advisors then continue to work with students about the appropriate use of E block, and how to independently use the block with the most benefit. Through goal setting and choice, students learn, and experience, the impact of their choices. Our E block can also provide a break to the rhythm of the day and an opportunity for connection with peers. In addition, there are some extracurricular activities offered during this time. Over time, our hope is that our students learn to use their time well and develop independent self-advocacy skills that will enable them to seek out support from teachers and advisors. There is also access to the Library Learning Commons (LLC) during this time.

### **Health & Wellness Education**

In this course, students develop their health literacy within a comprehensive curricular model that focuses on physical, mental, social, emotional, and intellectual health. This inclusive course builds on prior knowledge and skills and supports students as they consider the interconnectedness of these domains. As students explore core concepts of mental and emotional health, consent and healthy relationships, sexual health, identity, substance use/misuse, and interpersonal violence prevention, they practice life skills, including analyzing influences, accessing information, interpersonal communication, decision-making, goal setting, self-management, and advocacy.

### **Middle School Library Program (LLC)**

Our Library Learning Commons space is designed to support a diverse learning environment including independent student study, small-group work, and whole-class meetings. We are open during school hours for class meetings, student instruction, and recreational use. Library and Tech staff join forces to provide comprehensive information literacy resources and lessons to the Middle School community. At the beginning of the school year, the Librarian and the Academic Technology Specialist collaboratively teach library/research/technology classes to all 7th and 8th graders. We review the school’s Technology Use Policy regarding the safe and ethical use of technology, help students log onto their school online accounts, and introduce them to available print and electronic resources. We review the Academic Honesty Policy, discuss how to avoid plagiarism and explore the richness, complexities, ethics, and implications of generative Artificial Intelligence (AI). The Librarian and the Academic Technology Specialist collaborate with classroom teachers to integrate research skill instruction (properly citing sources, conducting effective online searches, etc.) throughout the Middle School curriculum, both in the



library and the classroom. The librarian curates resources for research pages within the library website (databases, ebooks, and websites) for identified research topics and themes to help students learn to identify research questions and determine what sort of information they will need to thrive in the research journey. The librarian is available to help train our students to be effective 21st-century lifelong learners!

The library collection includes print and digital resources to support classroom research and recreational reading and interests. Students have access to books, magazines, computers, tablets, e-readers, and more.

The library's online resource catalog and website, organized specifically for our Middle School curriculum, provides access to the library's virtual collection, including e-books, electronic databases, research pages, and selected websites. The library initiates literacy programs that encourage students to continue recreational reading throughout middle school. These activities include:

- Author/Poet visits
- Virtual Programming
- Reading Surveys
- Monthly Book Displays
- Drop Everything And Read (D.E.A.R)
- Book Talks
- Community Reads
- Cross-curricular connections with Service Learning

The MS student literary group (Lit Club) meets weekly on Fridays at lunch and supports these initiatives as well as sharing favorite books, participating in group reads, community collaboratives with the Upper and Lower Schools, and working through the Battle of the Books--a program involving group read and dialogue through creativity, group connections, and connecting with the literary community.

### **Lit Club: Battle of the Books**

The Literary Club Battle of the Books is an opportunity for students to get together and talk about books, play literary charades, review book adaptations to film, read, and more with other book lovers! Books will be selected by the members of the Lit Club and read over the course of the fall and spring terms ending with a friendly battle of Kahoot!, cake decorating, alternate book cover designs, and more! Contact Christina Dominique-Pierre, MS Librarian, at [cdominiquepierre@bbns.org](mailto:cdominiquepierre@bbns.org) to learn more. This group meets on Fridays during lunch.

### **6-8 Athletics**

The Associate Athletic Director, Joseph Campbell, oversees the 6-8 Athletic Program, also referred to as the Middle School Athletic Program.

The 6-8 Athletic Program is part of the school day and all students are required to participate in the program for all three seasons. Practice days are Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays, immediately following the academic programs at the Lower School and Middle School with dismissal occurring at the Nicholas Athletic Center on the Upper School Campus. Games are

typically played on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Fridays with times and locations made available seasonally on the athletics section of the website. Students will have athletic practice when they do not have a Tuesday game scheduled and will not have athletic practice when they do not have a Wednesday or Friday game scheduled. Student participation numbers will influence the programs, number of teams, and makeup of teams that BB&N is able to run each year. Student participation in a team sport must yield enough players in order to compete at an interscholastic level. A team placement and tryout process according to ability will be used when necessary. If a student does not make a team, an alternate plan to join another program will be arranged with the Associate Director of Athletics. The Athletic Department will always work towards helping students participate in their first-choice options.