

# Buckingham Browne & Nichols Middle School



**2023-24  
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 thoughtful curriculum, we encourage students to develop a sense of 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 making mistakes, our students 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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**HONOR   SCHOLARSHIP   KINDNESS**

## **BB&N MISSION**

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.

## **BB&N VALUES**

### **INQUIRY**

We promote curiosity and critical thinking to inspire a lifelong love of learning

### **INTEGRITY**

We strive to be honest, conscientious, and accountable in our actions even when no one is watching

### **BELONGING**

We foster a culture of respect, well-being, and connection that values all individuals and empowers them to discover and be their authentic selves.

### **KINDNESS**

We strengthen our communities by recognizing our common humanity and treating ourselves and others with respect and compassion.

## **BB&N MIDDLE SCHOOL**

### **PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVE PHILOSOPHY STATEMENT**

Students at the middle school level are energetic, idealistic, and voraciously curious about ideas, limits, and where they fit into the world. They are poised to take on a more independent role in their education. Our aim in the Buckingham Browne & Nichols Middle School is to provide learning in all areas of human development by offering a program which pays attention to intellectual, emotional, moral, artistic, and physical growth.

#### **Our Academic Learning Environment**

We recognize that we are a small community within the larger BB&N community. Our role, as a self-contained, comprehensive program for seventh and eighth graders, allows us to prepare our students for the challenges of high school in general, and BB&N Upper School specifically. As the middle stage in a beginner through twelfth grade program, we are committed to providing high academic standards within a nurturing environment in which individuals and their learning styles are supported.

#### **We aim to:**

- Encourage everyone to bring their authentic to our school community each day to our school community
- Share and learn different perspectives with members of our community
- Embrace and celebrate identity development and cultural backgrounds
- Create an environment that is supportive of each individual child and comfortable for risk-taking.
- Encourage each student to aim for his/her highest potential in every endeavor.
- Encourage active participation.
- Foster intellectual and artistic curiosity.
- Create opportunity for physical challenges within the framework of athletics.
- Set clear expectations while allowing flexibility for students' choice and responsibility.
- Provide time for reflection.
- Encourage leadership and independence.
- Help students develop self-confidence through success.
- Help students feel pride in effort as its own reward.

#### **The Content of Our Program**

We recognize that middle school students are in the midst of rapid and profound changes intellectually, physically, and emotionally. In order to provide opportunities for students to take advantage of the gifts unique to this age of transitions, we establish clear expectations and a variety of experiences and approaches to learning within a predictable structure.

#### **Our program:**

- Engages students in curriculum that offers windows and mirrors to highlight different experiences and perspectives that shape our world.
- Provides opportunities for intellectual growth through common activities as well as individual projects.
- Provides opportunities for students to work in groups in order to learn from each other, and to be responsible to others.
- Provides a balance between critical thinking, skill development, exploration, and openness to new ideas and mastery.

- Maintains clear, high standards while acknowledging and supporting a diversity of learning styles.
- Provides students with opportunities to demonstrate mastery of ideas in a variety of forms.
- Allows students to enjoy the challenge and fun of learning.

### **The School Community and Its Relationship To The Larger World**

Our program creates opportunities for students to learn about complex issues related to justice, privilege, diversity, and identity to stretch personal limits and to understand each person's value to our community and beyond.

#### **In our Advisory Program, we provide:**

- Experiences that will allow students to explore personal values and become informed decision-makers.
- Opportunities for students to explore conflict, ask meaningful questions, and advocate for themselves.
- Opportunities for students to participate meaningfully in an increasingly complex and diverse world.

#### **In general, we aim to enable students to:**

- Feel and cultivate a sense of community and belonging.
- Create positive relationships.
- Explore roles of leadership and constructive citizenship.
- Feel the satisfaction of giving for its own sake.
- Develop a sense of responsibility to participate in a larger community.

## 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 through our grammar website and writing revisions. Weekly assignment sheets, PowerSchool, 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*

*Before We Were Free*

*Voices Sketchbook Reader*

*Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Grammar Practice*

## GRADE 8

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 responsibly. Students will also refine grammar skills and build vocabulary through our grammar website and writing revisions. Students frequently make use of our Google Classroom as our learning management system both for resource information like weekly assignments sheet and class agendas or slide presentations as well as for all of our digital workflow. 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*

*The 57 Bus*

*Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Grammar Practice*

# 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 The Circuit, 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 essays, and website construction.

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 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 congressional bills, and explore the reasons for the 27 Amendments. Students choose and present Supreme Court Landmark Cases.
- 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 10 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:

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- 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 reach a high degree of oral proficiency, receive an in depth exposure to grammar and have an opportunity to read short stories. In these two languages, we place equal stress on understanding, speaking, reading and writing. Throughout the course, culture and civilization are stressed.

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	<i>D'Accord</i> (Vista Higher Learning)
Grade 8	<i>Bien Dit</i> by DeMado

#### Latin

Grade 7 & 8	No text is required. The students receive an in-house publication.
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#### Spanish

Grade 7 & 8:	<i>Descubre</i> (Vista Higher Learning). Students get access to the online book and resources. The students receive an in-house publication.
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## **Language 83**

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**

General music in the 7th grade is a skill building class that also develops prerequisite skills for 8th grade elective classes. Students work towards proficiency in musical notation through the study of rhythmic values, meter and time signatures, tempo, dynamic and articulation markings, pitch and use of treble and bass clefs. These skills are reinforced by using percussion instruments and composing an original composition. Topics include basic music theory and musicianship skills, score reading, ear training, form and analysis, and basic compositional practices.

## 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: Functional Pottery, Hand-built Sculpture, & Surface Design**

Ceramics in the 8th grade aims to create a relaxing environment to explore utilitarian hand-built pottery and also sculptural ceramics. As a class, we create a supportive community in which to find personal expression through three-dimensional ceramics. One elective centers on functional art projects such as mugs, plates, and bowls combined with learning a number of surface design techniques. The other elective supports larger and more detailed sculptural projects such as animals, larger expressive vessels, and boats. Simultaneously, more advanced surface design techniques are explored. Both the aesthetics of form and surface are key elements of this class as well as teaching art as a catalyst for social change. Students gain a deeper understanding of different kinds of clay & glaze options and learn about a variety of 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: 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 personal ideas and modes of expression. Students will have opportunities to create work that ranges from literal, technique-driven representations to symbolic, conceptual ways of thinking, to even abstract, 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.

#### **Two-Dimensional Art: 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.

#### **Printmaking**

Printmaking Class is a hands-on introduction to the artform of printmaking. In this class, students learn five printmaking techniques, including engraving, linocut, monoprint, stencil, and collograph. Students create a body of work exploring each of these techniques through the lens of a personally significant theme. In the process, students experiment with various forms of representation ranging from literal to symbolic and abstract. The emphasis this semester 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 em-

brace failure as a learning opportunity. Students will maintain a portfolio including design notes, prototypes, feedback, final products, and reflections.

## **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. Students 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. To assist students in making connections between algebraic and graphical solutions, we use both handheld TI-84 graphing calculators and the online graphing calculator at [desmos.com](https://www.desmos.com).

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 and Functions
- Volume of 3 dimensional shapes
- Exponents and Scientific Notation

8th graders use Paul Foerster's *Algebra I* published by Addison-Wesley

8th grade topics include:

- Multiplying and factoring polynomials
- Graphing and solving quadratic equations
- Solving and graphing linear equations and inequalities
- Solving and graphing systems of linear equations and inequalities
- Linear regressions
- Probability and fundamental counting principle
- Properties of exponents
- Rational expressions and equations
- Radical expressions and equations

All students have the opportunity to participate in the Math Olympiads during class, and we also offer a math club that meets weekly after school. 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 other summer math programs should discuss their plans with the math department. This will allow us to help select a course of study that is best for the student and least likely to create conflicts with our curriculum.

## ADVISORY PROGRAM

The Middle School Advisory Program provides support to students in all aspects of their school experience through direct student support and daily explorations that addresses core character skills embodied in the school's motto of Honor, Scholarship and Kindness. Themes and activities are guided by nationally-recognized thinking about the importance of social and emotional learning (SEL). The Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL). CASEL has researched and identified that effective SEL programs have the power to:

- Improve students' social-emotional skills, attitudes about self and others, and social interactions
- Improve students' academic performance and attitudes toward school
- Prepare young people for success in adulthood by building skills in communication, collaboration, leadership, and connection with community

To achieve these objectives, programming must address five interrelated sets of cognitive, affective and behavioral competencies that include: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills and responsible decision making. (For more information about CASEL, please visit: <http://casel.org/why-it-matters/>.)

These competencies and intentions guide the mission and programming of the entire Advisory Program and its two component parts: the direct student support of the Advisor-Advisee Relationship and peer explorations of themes and activities through Explorations.

### 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 Support Specialists, Counselor and Nurse.

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

### Advisory Explorations

This year we continue to hold in awareness the evolving double pandemic of the covid virus and structural racism impacting our world. We recognized the imperative of focusing on the care of and connection with students with heightened sensitivity, humility, and intentionality.

To do this, we are holding a lens of Community wellbeing in addition to CASEL to support our guiding principles to our Explorations. In addition, we refer to Responsive Classroom to help frame our interactions with students in our morning Homebase gatherings and our longer Explorations times.

During daily Homebase 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
- Wellbeing of your body and mind and the connections between them
- Empathy - what does it mean to us and how to put it into action

- Our shared commitment to community kindness and health/safety; vital during these covid times.

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.

We strive to design Explorations that are developmental but not rigidly sequential to provide flexible scaffolding of themes introduced in the Lower School and themes that will be expanded upon in the Upper School. For example, 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 foster independence, and continue exploring who they are inside and out. Through various activities, Advisees explore their own individual identities as well as their roles within the school and the larger community. Advisory Explorations also looks to partner and augment themes and projects that are explored in the Middle School academic curricula such as self expression, family backgrounds, and cultural differences.

## **E BLOCK: Extra help/In-School Work Time**

E Block/extra help /in-school work time: Midday, we have E block for in-school work time and extra help as well as a few extra-curricular activities. Students use this time to complete their work individually or collaboratively, to reconnect with friends and classmates and/or connect with teachers for extra help or make-up work. Students also keep track of their E block time usage and discuss it with their advisors on a regular basis. In academic classes and in advisory, faculty stress that learning to make good choices, managing time and learning to self advocate are core to our philosophy here at the Middle School. E Block was designed with these goals in mind and offers an opportunity to support students by creating a break as well as access to teachers and fellow students during the school day.

## **HEALTH AND 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.

## ACTIVITIES BEYOND THE CLASSROOM

We offer clubs and activities throughout the week. Current offerings include:

### COMMUNITY SERVICE LEARNING CLUB

The Community Service Learning Club works to support our school and our local and global communities. In addition to education and advocacy to combat hunger and homelessness, we also engage in direct service work. Past projects include cooking meals for women at Duley House, visiting with residents at Neville Senior Center, and serving as ambassadors during school-wide drives for partner organizations like Boston Medical Center, Caitie's Closet, and Heading Home. Students will also have the opportunity to design and execute projects of their own choosing. If you or your student have any questions about the organizations we serve or is interested in learning more about service learning at the Middle School, please contact Zoe Tarshis at [ztarshis@bbns.org](mailto:ztarshis@bbns.org). You can also check out the [BB&N Service Learning Hub](#) for more information about service learning.

### THE SPARK

*The Spark* is our Middle School publication where students stretch their creative wings and make their important voices heard in our community. *Spark* staffers contribute cutting-edge news and opinion articles about both in-school and outside-of-school happenings to the "Current Events" section of the publication. They also write reviews, create games, puzzles, comics, and more! Creative writers on the staff contribute their amazing stories, poems, and artwork to the "Victorian" section of the publication. And, we even have slam poetry videos and podcasts. Come join this amazing community of reporters, authors, poets, podcasters, and artists! Contact coordinator Betsy Canaday for more information at [bcanaday@bbns.org](mailto:bcanaday@bbns.org).

### MATH CLUB

The Math Club will participate in 3 competitions this year. In the fall, we will enter Math Madness, a bracket style tournament modeled after the popular NCAA March Madness basketball tournament. In the winter, we will prepare for the AMC8, a national contest offered by the Mathematical Association of America. In the spring, teams of two to six students will work together to solve challenging problems in an international contest called Purple Comet. Students can choose which events interest them, or try them all. Previous achievement or experience with math competitions is not required. A positive and cooperative attitude is required, as the Math Club is a place for young mathematicians to help each other be the best they can be. Contact Richard Chang for more information at [rchang@bbns.org](mailto:rchang@bbns.org).

### DEBATE CLUB

Debate Club members have the opportunity to learn and practice a wide range of public speaking and debate skills. We find many different ways to learn and practice the skills needed to compete in debate, while also becoming confident public speakers! We also hope to provide an opportunity for the Middle School and High School Debate groups to come together, so students can learn from their peers and feel prepared to continue on to the High School Debate Team. No previous experience necessary! Contact Anna Curtis at [acurtis@bbns.org](mailto:acurtis@bbns.org) or Thanaydi Sandoval at [tsandoval@bbns.org](mailto:tsandoval@bbns.org) for more information.

### CABARET CLUB

Cabaret Club is a performing elective that provides an opportunity for students who are interested in Broadway style songs. It involves solo and ensemble singing, choreography and there are performance opportunities at least twice a year. If you are interested in singing, dancing or playing music, consider joining this fast-paced, fun-filled club. Open to all who are interested. Audition, not required. Contact Cabaret Club coordinators Kathi Gellar with questions at [kgellar@bbns.org](mailto:kgellar@bbns.org) or Christa Crewdson at [ccrewatson@bbns.org](mailto:ccrewatson@bbns.org).

## **MODEL UN**

BB&N's Model UN club has students research and roleplay as delegates in a simulation of the United Nations General Assembly and other specialized UN committees. After being assigned a country, committee, and topic, students learn how to prepare for a conference, write a position paper, navigate parliamentary procedure, and work with other countries to solve the world's problems. Go diplomacy! For more information, contact Model UN coordinator Lauren Hoyt at [lhoyt@bbns.org](mailto:lhoyt@bbns.org).

## **CLAY CLUB**

Students will enjoy guided ceramics projects based on the interest of the group to increase technical skills and especially to have fun in a relaxed environment. Delicious snacks will be provided as we enjoy each other's company and build community. Independent projects will be welcome as we inspire each other's creativity, experimentation, and playfulness. Contact Clay Club Coordinator Sasha Bergmann for more information at [sbergmann@bbns.org](mailto:sbergmann@bbns.org).

## MIDDLE SCHOOL LIBRARY PROGRAM (LLC)

Our newly-renovated Library Learning Commons space is designed to support independent student study, small group work, and whole class meetings. We are open during school hours and classes often meet in this space. Students are welcome during E block and break. Library and Tech staff join forces to provide comprehensive information literacy resources 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 and discuss how to avoid plagiarism. 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 links from the library website to group together targeted reliable electronic sources (databases, ebooks and websites) for identified topics. Students learn to identify research questions, determine what sort of information they will need, and focus on their topics. Library staff support classroom teachers with research and instruction through identifying and accessing resources to further support the topics and themes within the curriculum, as well as creating opportunities for asynchronous/synchronous learning modules for further depth. Library staff is available to help train our students to be effective 21st century learners!

The library collection includes print and online resources that support classroom research as well as recreational reading. Students have access to books, magazines, desktop and laptop computers, ipad tablets and e-readers.

The library's online library catalog and website, organized specifically for our Middle School curriculum, provides access to the library's virtual collection, including e-books, electronic databases, 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
- Book Talks
- Community Reads
- Cross Curricular connection with Service Learning and Literacy

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 competition, 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.

