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MIDDLE SCHOOL
CURRICULUM



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Middle School students complete seven class periods each day. Academic courses include Literacy Instruction (Reading, Language Therapy, Language Connections, Language Arts), Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, and Physical Education. Elective courses include Introduction to Drama, Visual Arts, and Computer Applications.

LITERACY INSTRUCTIONS

Literacy is the ability to read, write, listen with understanding, and speak. The Fairhill Literacy Committee has worked to create an academic program to support the goals of literacy in a way that meets the individual needs of each student.

COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

DYSLEXIA INTERVENTION Grades 6-8

The Take Flight and JET programs are sequential and structured language programs designed to teach reading, spelling, handwriting and alphabet skills. These programs were developed by Texas Scottish Rite Hospital for Children and are based on Orton-Gillingham principles for dyslexia intervention.

The multi-sensory programs continue through the middle school grades to refine secondary reading and spelling skills. The emphasis of dyslexia intervention at this level is to reinforce the automatic response to reading, spelling, and writing and to utilize those skills in a variety of applications.

LANGUAGE CONNECTIONS Grade 6

Based on research on developmental spelling and word knowledge, the framework of the Language Connections class provides an exploration of spelling or orthographic knowledge as words are examined for relationships, sounds, spelling patterns, and meanings. Students examine, manipulate, and categorize words with a discovery approach resulting in more confident, proficient, and joyful readers/writers as literacy skills are developed. This approach provides students with the skills to retain, internalize and transfer valuable knowledge for improved results in all areas of literacy including written expression. Cursive writing instruction and practice will be incorporated into this curriculum.

LANGUAGE ARTS/ENGLISH

The Language Arts/English course emphasizes the writing process. Students complete a variety of essay styles and critically assess their work through a writing portfolio. Each project focuses on the different phases of the writing process: pre-writing, writing, revising, editing, and publishing. Elements of grammar and new vocabulary words are introduced through daily lessons and writing projects. This course complements the reading/literature course.

READING/LITERATURE

The reading curriculum is an interactive program that involves both decoding and comprehension. Students are given opportunities to learn, practice, and apply strategies as part of a dynamic process. Instruction is meaning based and integrates listening, speaking, reading, writing, spelling, and critical thinking. A variety of instructional activities accommodate different learning styles and varying language proficiencies. An eclectic approach involves both phonetic and whole language classroom instruction. Class time is divided between use of a literature-based text and novel units. As readers advance, they study extensively in multiple genres from world literature for such purposes as enjoyment, gathering information, learning about and appreciating the writer's craft, as well as discovering models for their own writing. Students respond to texts through class discussion and writing, connecting their knowledge of the world and the knowledge they gather through reading to develop higher critical thinking skills.

ADDITIONAL CORE CURRICULUM

MATHEMATICS

Math instruction focuses on developing number concepts from concrete experiences to abstract understanding. Each concept is introduced with a variety of manipulatives. Instruction progresses through semi-concrete and abstract levels as the student demonstrates an understanding of the concept. In addition to concept development, problem-solving is emphasized. Students are taught to think mathematically to apply their mathematics understanding and skills to solve problems. The 8th grade math course builds upon concepts learned in grades 6 and 7 so students develop a solid foundation on which to build mathematical skills. Repeated practice benefits conceptual understanding and problem-solving in quantitative reasoning, algebraic thinking, geometry, spatial reasoning, measurement, probability, and statistics.

ALGEBRA I

Those 8th grade students who are ready for a more challenging math curriculum may begin taking Algebra I prior to entering high school grades. Algebra I students use functions to represent and model problem situations, set up equations, and use a variety of methods to solve these equations. Lessons focus on solving linear and quadratic equations using models, tables, graphs, and algebraic methods. Students completing this course in the 8th grade receive high school credit.

SCIENCE

The science program expands students' scientific knowledge and abstract thinking skills through an integrated program touching on ecology, geology, biology, chemistry, and physical science. Through media, class discussions, and lab experiments, students address genetics, ecosystems, geologic time and Earth's history, the Solar System, the Periodic Table and chemical reactions, electricity, magnetism, sound, and light. Students observe, measure, infer, make judgments, analyze data, test hypotheses, and conduct experiments through guided discovery.

SOCIAL STUDIES

Social studies involves history, geography, political science, economics, and sociology. Each discipline provides an understanding of human relationships and our world, past and present. Content is reinforced through dramatizations, discussions, research, and project-based learning. Middle school topics include an introduction to World History in 6th grade, Texas history in 7th grade, and American History in 8th grade. Historical insights are related to current events using periodicals, and map skills are strengthened.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

The goal of physical education is to develop attitudes, skills, and knowledge of movement that will result in lifetime participation in physical activity to maintain physical fitness. The program focuses on fundamental movement and fitness skills. Middle school students are introduced to a variety of sports including required fitness, athletic skill development, and game rules with an emphasis on participation for enjoyment and challenge.



ENRICHMENT / ELECTIVES

COMPUTER APPLICATIONS

The technology program implements educational technologies into the classroom, enhancing the learning process and expanding the skills and capabilities of all students. Students learn word processing, graphic design, spreadsheet applications including charts and graphs, slide show productions, and research techniques using electronic reference tools. Content-specific software programs support and reinforce the academic curriculum.

INTRODUCTION TO DRAMA

The Introduction to Drama course includes an improvisational approach to drama techniques and the beginning elements of performance. Participation has the potential to develop communication, problem-solving, creativity, and performance skills. The course promotes a positive self-concept, social awareness, empathy, clarification of values and attitudes, and an understanding of the art of theater.

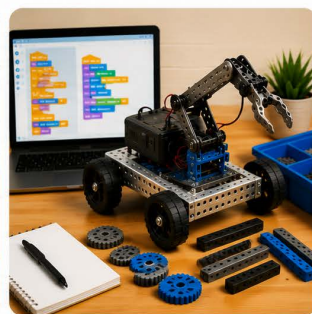
VISUAL ARTS

Visual Art is expressing and symbolizing concepts within a level of literacy comparable to the verbal and perceptual development of the child. This is achieved through emphasis on form, texture, color, line, and the ways these elements affect our lives. Full understanding results in visual literacy, or the ability to express and communicate in non-verbal terms. Art students experience hands-on activities while strengthening observation skills, spatial relationships, art terminology, and their understanding of various techniques and mediums. Through connections to artists and periods of art history, students gain respect for and create pieces built upon individual differences and creativity.

ROBOTICS

Robotics is a introductory course on robot design and programming. This course utilizes Lego robotic kits and software, introduces science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) to students through fun, exciting hands-on learning. Participants gain real world problem-solving experiences through a guided, yet self-paced robotics program.

Students engage in hands-on STEM experiences, which foster confidence and habits of learning. Robotics inspire youth to experiment and grow in their critical thinking, coding and design skills through hands-on STEM learning.



FIRST FRIDAY CLUBS

First Friday Clubs provide Middle School students with opportunities to explore interests outside of the traditional classroom setting. Through a variety of teacher-led activities, students can discover new interests, develop skills, and connect with classmates and faculty in a fun and engaging environment. The clubs encourage creativity, collaboration, and community while giving students a chance to participate in experiences based on their individual interests.

