

Middle School Curriculum

Wildwood School is a unique center of teaching and learning. Our innovative faculty and dynamic curriculum offer every opportunity for students to discover and grow intellectually, personally, and emotionally. Each course within our program is designed to actively engage students in the learning process, challenging them to stretch and find a home in the world of ideas. Many classes are interdisciplinary because we believe that supporting children as they make connections is vital to a nuanced understanding of the way our world works.

We invite you to read on and discover what Wildwood students and families know and expect: intellectual rigor and infinite doorways to knowledge and creativity for every mind.

Middle School

Wildwood's middle school program offers every student intellectual and creative opportunities in an active learning environment, where adolescent development is understood and fully supported.

Middle school academics are increasingly rigorous as students are challenged in an interdisciplinary humanities class—illuminating social studies and language arts—and mathematics, science, and Spanish. Building on the critical-thinking skills developed in elementary school, Wildwood middle school students cultivate an ability to examine and understand complex concepts, investigate and build evidence, and present findings. Technology and library proficiencies mature with instruction using a range of software and emerging tech tools. Classes in the visual and performing arts give every student opportunities to learn and hone technique and experiment widely in the arts and music. Physical education courses help every student sharpen skills and understand the benefits of P.E. and health.

Middle school enrichment opportunities include environmental and intergenerational community involvement, while Wildwood's multicultural programming explores positive identity development for every student through a range of classroom experiences, events, and clubs. Academic support is provided daily in advisory where teachers serve as mentors to a small group of students, cultivating strong adult- and student-to-student relationships. Wildwood's Habits of Mind and Heart are fluidly represented through the curriculum, providing a set of values and skills that will serve students throughout their studies and in life.

HUMANITIES

Wildwood students study social studies and language arts as humanities throughout their middle school experience. This interdisciplinary course is team-taught. Sixth grade students explore ancient civilizations; seventh grade students focus on world studies; and eighth grade students dive deeply into American history.

All classes include literature complementing historic themes that encourage deep engagement through the use of essential questions connecting ideas across language arts and social studies. Students discuss historic and modern events, making connections to literary texts or current topics. Students work individually and in small cooperative groups, learning to closely collaborate, exchange ideas, and peer-edit their classmates' writing.

Sixth Grade

Ancient Civilization

Essential Question: *"Who am I and what is my voice?"* Students look at how writers, artists, dancers, and musicians explore their worlds and their multicultural selves. Students observe how diverse cultures, histories, and exposures contribute to the perspectives and voices of these creative people. Students read articles and novels about young people their ages, alike and different, who have struggles, challenges, and achievements to share. The units of study help students explore who they are and how literature, history, and culture shape their voices. They also explore ancient civilizations and the many lives represented there. Students use the different forms of writing (narrative, persuasive, informative, and expository) to learn about their own voices.

ESSENTIAL SKILLS:

- Organization
- Reading, writing, and discussion about literature
- Research methodology, including citing sources accurately in reporting
- Critical thinking about the influence of diversity of culture on perspective and voice

Seventh Grade

Global Studies

Essential Question: *"What is the responsibility of an individual to the community on a local, national, and global level?"* Students explore global perspectives with a lens that covers the span of the medieval period to modern day, focusing first on India and Africa. The exploration includes the examination of geography, culture, economics, political climate, and leaders whose actions inspired their communities to "come of age" through the development of beliefs. Students read a variety of texts, primary and secondary documents, as well as current events to track the development of varying nations and give context to global concerns. In the second half of the year, students examine how one's cultural identity influences global perspective, choices, and opportunities by exploring Medieval Europe and Japan. Through analytical essays, research projects, poetry, and creative writing pieces, students examine central issues and give voice to injustices around the world, demonstrating their global citizenship and responsibility.

ESSENTIAL SKILLS:

- Descriptive, analytic, and persuasive writing
- Read and analyze and discuss the development of world governments through literature and other texts
- Research methodology, including citing sources accurately in reporting
- Oral presentation

Eighth Grade

American Studies

Essential Question: *"How does the concept of 'We' in 'We the People' expand and contract throughout United States history?"* By teaching that the Constitution and the Bill of Rights are living documents being constantly interpreted, students grow to understand their own rights and responsibilities as citizens. With these primary documents in mind, students explore how the United States has tried to find the right balance between a government with too much power and not enough structure. A close reading of Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451* reveals the horrors of censorship, while Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird* points to potential flaws in a judicial system that lacks the authority, or willingness, to address injustices and enforce civil rights. Through an emphasis on multiple perspectives, students take a deep look at conflicts and compromises of the characterized a young nation's growing pains in units of study on Westward Expansion, the Civil War, Reconstruction, and the Civil Rights Movement. Students have opportunities to demonstrate their learning in a variety of ways, including projects, debates, essays, and classroom discussions. Throughout the course, emphasis is placed on the voices that get heard and the voices that are silenced in this expanding democratic-republic. By the end of the year, students not only have synthesized and heard numerous distinct voices, but also have a sense of the elements necessary to effectively engage the world with a sense of one's own writing style and voice.

ESSENTIAL SKILLS:

- Understanding literary devices and finding evidence that links to themes
- Descriptive, analytic, creative and persuasive writing
- Public Speaking and Debate
- Research websites and databases to find and analyze primary sources

MATHEMATICS

Building on the skills and content mastered during the elementary years, each student progresses through the middle school mathematics curriculum at an individual pace. Students move through foundational material that provides readiness for algebraic thinking to pre-algebra, algebra, and geometry. Math classes emphasize skills ranging from decimals and fractions to the Pythagorean Theorem in algebra and two-column proofs in geometry. Experiential activities, using visual and kinesthetic approaches, help students learn the skills essential for algebraic reasoning. Hands-on equations and project-based learning provide real-world connections to abstract concepts, allowing students to learn answers to the perennial question, *"When will I ever use this again?"*

Direct instruction coupled with cooperative group work fosters collaboration, creative problem-solving, and an appreciation of multiple means to finding solutions. Students gain confidence as they master concepts through a range of assessments, including peer and teacher feedback, demonstrations of knowledge, and projects. Student projects include components of engineering applications, art, and social justice.

The middle school math curriculum provides the foundation for the following skills. Individual classes support the development of additional skills as specified.

ESSENTIAL SKILLS:

- Convert fractions to decimals and percents
- Computation with positive and negative numbers
- Understand proportions and ratios

- Understand a variable in an equation
- Write, solve, and graph equations; create algebraic word problems

Sixth Grade

Math Foundations

In sixth grade, students build a deeper understanding of arithmetic, geometry, and algebraic reasoning and create a solid foundation for future coursework in algebra, geometry, and statistics. The class begins with a unit exploring how our brains learn math, empowering students with a greater understanding of how classwork and homework build connections in the brain, and the value of the “constructive struggle.” Using puzzles and hands-on models, students further develop algebraic reasoning and learn to represent and analyze quantitative relationships between dependent and independent variables. Students then extend their knowledge of multiplication and division to build mastery of rational numbers and their relationships. Projects include building scale models and creating logic puzzles.

ESSENTIAL SKILLS:

- Understand ratio concepts and use ratio reasoning to solve problems involving rates, proportions, and statistics
- Apply and extend previous understandings of multiplication and division to divide fractions by fractions and solve related world problems
- Represent and analyze quantitative relationships between dependent and independent variables
- Solve real-world and mathematical problems involving area, surface area, and volume

Seventh Grade

Pre-Algebra

This introduction to algebraic thinking guides students in adding, subtracting, multiplying, and dividing rational numbers. Students build on their understanding of ratios, scale factor, and scaling, and they solve proportions with algebraic thinking. Students simplify and evaluate expressions that include fractions, decimals, unknown variables, and exponents. Solving one- and two-step equations, students work with whole numbers, fractions, and negative integers. Students explore multiple ways to find the slope of a line.

ESSENTIAL SKILLS:

- Understand a variable in an equation
- Write and solve graphing equations
- Graph linear equations
- Graph the slope of a line, including understanding the equation $y=mx+b$

Eighth Grade

Algebra Concepts

This course builds on foundations students have to evaluate expressions, combine like terms, use order of operations, and solve multiple-step equations to interpret patterns in tables and graphs. Working with slope-intercept forms of lines, students graph lines from an equation. Students demonstrate dexterity in writing equations. Students explore multiple algebraic methods to solve systems of equations. Working with polynomials and quadratics, students gain confidence in multiplying binomials and factoring quadratic equations. Finally, students learn to write an equation from the graph of a parabola.

ESSENTIAL SKILLS:

- Solve multiple-step equations accurately
- Write equations from a graph or table and reverse process
- Create algebraic word problems
- Demonstrate understanding of the quadratic formula

Geometry

This course is designed to develop logical and visual-thinking skills. Students investigate geometric concepts in cooperative groups, exploring the properties of geometric figures using Geometer's Sketchpad, mirrors, tracing paper, and cut-out shapes. First semester includes symmetry, creating mandalas, line designs, and tessellations. Students apply algebraic skills in order to graph lines, which culminates in an art-related project. Students are prepared for the study of triangles and finally parallelograms.

ESSENTIAL SKILLS:

- Identify and create reflections, rotations, and translations
- Understand angle relationships
- Explain and use properties of parallel lines
- Prove triangles
- Recognize and use theorems

SCIENCE

Middle school science is inquiry-based and incorporates investigations, explorations, model creations, and hands-on activities as the basis for all coursework and labs. Influenced by Carl Sagan's belief that "science is a way of thinking much more than it is a body of knowledge," the middle school science curriculum values critical thinking and analysis as much as the content to be mastered.

Students focus on general science principles, life science, and environmental science. Coursework emphasizes lab safety and writing formal lab reports, all with an emphasis on what it means to think like a scientist, ask incisive questions, generate hypotheses, and observe and analyze data while thinking critically about the world in which we live.

The middle school science curriculum provides the foundation for the following skills. Individual classes support the development of additional skills as specified.

ESSENTIAL SKILLS:

- Understand and use the scientific method to present findings and research
- Data collection and graphing
- Microscope use
- Dissection (plant and animal)

Sixth Grade**Earth Science...And Beyond**

This hands-on course introduces and incorporates a variety of scientific skills needed to properly and accurately engage in the various fields of science. Students focus on collecting and analyzing data, writing and testing hypotheses, and drawing conclusions based on tests and experiments. The main units of study in this

course center around Earth Science. Students first learn about the different characteristics of the Earth, including a study of its different layers. We then look at the formation of different landforms through the study of plate tectonics. Next, we study the Earth's atmosphere, focusing on weather patterns and predictions. Finally, we leave the comfort of our home planet and look outward into space and our position in the solar system. All of these concepts are introduced and explored through a variety of engaging activities and lab experiments, and are then reinforced and applied through in-depth and complex projects.

ESSENTIAL SKILLS:

- Understand and use the scientific method to present findings and research
- Data collection and graphing
- Basics of Earth Science
- Understanding of the solar system and Earth's place within it

Seventh Grade

Life Science

Starting with cells swabbed from their own cheeks, students are launched into a world of scientific discovery. Students compare cells from their own bodies to cells from plants. The lives of cells are explored through mitosis, genetics, and the study of DNA. Collaborating as scientists and designers, students work in teams to design and build a cell city and explain how the city functions as a collection of cells through photosynthesis, respiration, or active transport. Students also study animal cells, including bacteria and viruses, and then move on to more complex life forms of invertebrates, vertebrates, fish, amphibians, reptiles, and mammals. This study includes dissection labs.

ESSENTIAL SKILLS:

- Understand and use scientific language appropriately
- Analysis of evidence to make thoughtful and logical predictions
- Lab safety

Eighth Grade

Environmental Science

This class focuses on humans' impact on the environment, while exploring ways to live more sustainably. During the first half of the year, students engage in the Future Cities Project, which includes using software to "create" a future city, writing a research paper to highlight key aspects of the city, building a model of the city, and presenting the project to peers. Throughout the year, students explore topics, including geology, alternative energies, and global climate change; use data to investigate patterns of rainfall in Los Angeles; and learn methods for predicting natural disasters. Students also have the opportunity to work on an urban gardening project, meet local farmers, and explore the options they have for eating more sustainably.

ESSENTIAL SKILLS:

- Data analysis
- Understand natural systems, biomimicry, and sustainability
- Investigation of sustainable practice in urban planning

SPANISH

With an emphasis on communication, each course is designed to create opportunities for students to speak, listen, read, and write in every class. While learning vocabulary relevant to daily life, students work on a range of rigorous projects using visuals to reinforce the spoken language. Units of study include increasingly sophisticated vocabulary and grammatical structures, encouraging students to expand their communication skills. By the end of middle school, students write original poetry and short stories in Spanish, demonstrating mastery of basic skills and an ability to express themselves fluently and creatively in Spanish.

Sixth Grade

This course introduces verb tenses, building on basic topics and common vocabulary used in everyday Spanish, including weather, clothes, age, emotional states, question words, and prepositions. Course content is introduced through stories, songs, visuals, or picture sequences. Students learn the target vocabulary and structures through various activities, including acting, illustration, creative writing, and answering direct questions. The goal is for students to comprehend and produce the vocabulary in new situations, both in spoken and written form.

ESSENTIAL SKILLS:

- Comprehension and writing of target vocabulary in Spanish
- Demonstrate ability to use correct grammatical structures

Seventh and Eighth Grades

With the objective of clearly communicating ideas in conversation, students build on foundational skills. Emphasis is placed on broadening vocabulary, learning to conjugate regular and irregular verbs in the present tense, and becoming familiar with the preterit and the imperfect. Conversational fluency evolves as students ask and answer questions in Spanish, converse, and engage in storytelling using the correct verb tense. As ability and confidence in understanding spoken and written Spanish develops, students explore literature through novels, poetry, and describing and comparing characters employing advanced verb usage.

ESSENTIAL SKILLS:

- Demonstrate ability to use correct grammatical structures
- Fluency with verb conjugations, including the present and preterit tenses
- Conversational and idiomatic ease
- Vocabulary building for speaking, reading, and writing

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

During 6th and 7th grades, students rotate through arts courses each trimester. This sampling of arts expressions includes visual arts, music, and performing arts, allowing students to grow creatively while studying technique and experimenting in each area. An interdisciplinary approach is taken as subject matter from other coursework is woven into a range of arts experiences that deepens knowledge and develops creative skills and talents.

At the conclusion of the two-year trimester rotation, students enter the 8th grade having studied each of the arts, and are well-prepared to choose one area of personal interest on which to focus during the year.

Sixth Grade

Visual Arts

Students are introduced to art vocabulary, elements of art (line, color, texture, value, and shape), and the principles of art (composition, balance, and contrast). Working with pencils, colored pencils, and acrylic paints, students create still-life drawings, a value scale, texture rubbings, color wheels, and a monochromatic acrylic painting. Projects encourage students to draw inspiration and ideas from the community at large. Students illustrate their observations of the ocean and pollution, creating a colored-pencil drawing.

ESSENTIAL SKILLS:

- Proper use of tools, techniques, and materials
- Demonstrate understanding of elements of design and principles of art
- Demonstrate understanding of art vocabulary

Sixth Grade

Performing Arts

A primary goal of the Division One performing arts class is to introduce students to a range of classical dramatic and experimental stagecraft. Students read and write scripts, participate in readings and staged dramatic expression, and develop character studies. Original student skits and monologues are written as the foundation for paired and ensemble work. Students gain skills, cultivate their talents, and take risks beyond their comfort zone to understand the demands of dramatic discipline. A nurturing, safe ensemble environment allows students to experience artistic growth.

ESSENTIAL SKILLS:

- Demonstrate understanding of various dramatic creative expressions
- Demonstrate an openness to new artistic subject matter and a willingness to explore
- Actively seek and examine connections between self, society, and historic events

Sixth Grade

Music

Each student plays and experiments with instruments ranging from guitar, drums, piano, bass, and vocals to trumpet, flute, clarinet, and saxophone. Together, students create music using ensemble instruments, each person fulfilling a distinct role of rhythm, melody, or harmony. The chromatic scale and major and minor chords on the piano and guitar are introduced. Students write short rhythmic compositions inspired by tribal life, working in small groups to create original compositions and perform them for the class, as part of guided discussions on the role of music in society, ancient and modern.

ESSENTIAL SKILLS:

- Ability to play the chromatic scale on the guitar or piano
- Demonstrate understanding of rhythm
- Write original rhythmic composition
- Perform in solo and ensemble situations
- Demonstrate understanding of the role of music in society

Seventh Grade

Visual Arts

This trimester course dives deeply into a study of pose and the figure through a variety of media including collage, clay, drawing and painting. Through the lens of art history, students consider, *what choices have artists considered when depicting the human figure?* A careful set of exercises guide students through an articulation of pose and gesture as well as proportion and form. Class discussions and personal reflections point students to articulate what goes into depicting a pose that is powerful, dynamic, and expressive.

ESSENTIAL SKILLS

- Applying proper use of tools, techniques and materials
- Persisting in the development of observational skills
- Understanding examples in art history and articulating interpretations of artworks

Seventh Grade

Performing Arts

This 12-week trimester course focuses on core concepts of theatre arts with a particular focus on actor training and technique. Through physical theatre games, improvisation projects, creative drama techniques, dance and choreography projects, as well as traditional scene work and rehearsal study, students have an opportunity to engage in the field of deep play! Play makes room for students to flex their intuitive muscles and to practice healthy risk-taking necessary for growth and insight. Students will practice and perform improvised scenes, learn to choreograph and perform small dance etudes, develop their abilities to create character with the help of self-generated background details and assigned scene work/script study, and learn how to identify and pursue a character objective.

ESSENTIAL SKILLS:

- Develop fundamental performance skills, including body, voice and spatial awareness
- Make personal connections between self and character
- Create, analyze, and interpret scenes and monologues for presentation
- Work collaboratively to discover artistic solutions and make interpretive choices
- Give and receive constructive input and thoughtful, supportive feedback

Seventh Grade

Music

Students become acquainted with the elements of music including instrumentation, form, melody, harmony and rhythm through learning music from around the world and from the American tradition of the blues. History and conventions of various genres and the basics of notation are introduced. With these new skills, the students write, notate, and perform their own original composition with lyrics, collaborating in small groups to prepare and practice. Students research artists, along with cultural, historical, and social issues relevant to the music and participate in discussions using the language and vocabulary of music.

ESSENTIAL SKILLS:

- Understand and use the pentatonic or blues scale
- Compose an original melody
- Apply music theory concepts in performance

Eighth Grade

Visual Arts

This year-long survey course builds upon foundational understandings of the elements and principles of art and focuses on developing conceptual and technical skills. Students experiment with materials and techniques to create compositions that convey personal ideas, emotions and expression. Class discussions include examples of how artists have drawn from their personal and political experiences and stories as subject material.

Students consider: *How is art a reflection of our lives and our time?* An emphasis on artistic inquiry guides students through their choices as they develop their own thematic projects.

ESSENTIAL SKILLS:

- Articulate intentions and artistic choices
- Symbolic and abstract forms of expression
- Building technical and conceptual skills across media

Eighth Grade

Performing Arts

This year-long elective course takes a walk through theatre history while giving students the opportunity to act in scenes, write and perform monologues, and create numerous comic and dramatic characters. Students study Ancient Greek theatre, Commedia dell'Arte with masks, Elizabethan England and William Shakespeare, Realism, and Absurdism. Additionally, students have the opportunity to conduct an Independent Study Project where they design and implement their own area of study - writing, directing, technical theatre, dialect, stand-up comedy, musical theatre, etc. The course culminates in an evening exhibition of class work for family, friends and teachers. This class is a safe, supportive place for students to take risks and to discover their unique artistic voice, individually and as part of an ensemble.

ESSENTIAL SKILLS:

- Develop fundamental performance skills, including the effective use of the body and voice on stage
- Create, analyze, and interpret artistic work for presentation
- Connect class exercises, group discussions and individual feedback to developing performance skills
- Incorporate understanding of theatre history in making artistic choices
- Demonstrate the ability to work as part of a creative team to discover artistic solutions and make interpretive choices

Eighth Grade

Music

Students learn to sing and play in small ensembles. They learn to thoughtfully choose repertoire and to transcribe arrangements as well as creating their own arrangements with consideration for their instrumentation and vocal abilities. Students learn to notate music and to understand the elements of music theory. Students learn cover songs and then write their own songs and play them with their groups. Students have the opportunity to try different instruments and are encouraged to do so. Students also listen to a variety of musical styles and learn to appreciate and understand music in its cultural context.

ESSENTIAL SKILLS:

- Play music together with others in an ensemble
- Compose an original melody
- Learn and apply music theory concepts in performance

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Wildwood's middle school physical education program is designed to provide a safe and nurturing place for adolescents to develop healthy attitudes and practices for both mind and body. Students set and meet personal fitness goals by participating in individual and team activities. Emphasis is on understanding the importance of sportsmanship and wellness as a lifelong habit during this time of personal and physical development.

For students who want to sharpen specific skills to participate in Wildwood's interscholastic athletic program or build their confidence in casual play, the middle school P.E. curriculum supports every student's goals.

Sixth Grade

Sixth grade P.E. focuses on students understanding team building. Framed by the essential question, *"How does a team work best together?"* students gain awareness of productive collaboration and positive team play.

Physical coordination is enhanced as students rotate through a series of games, including speedball, basketball, volleyball, and flag football. Students are coached on basic techniques for most games, including pivoting, defensive blocking, and quick change direction of movement.

Seventh and Eighth Grades

Classes are structured to encourage students of all levels of interest and skill to participate.

In the first semester, students participate in rotating units, including badminton, flag football, and soccer. The second unit incorporates traditional sports of basketball and volleyball, with some ultimate Frisbee. Middle school P.E. prepares players for middle school teams. The final unit of the year introduces students to circuit training. Dance and yoga are offered as wellness activities that can be pursued as upper school students.

ADDITIONAL HIGHLIGHTS OF THE MIDDLE SCHOOL EXPERIENCE

Sixth Grade

Organization and Study Skills

In this course, students develop the skills they need to transition from fifth grade and be successful in middle school. Students learn tips, skills, and strategies to apply to test-taking, project-making, time-management, organization and prioritizing. In the process, students gain a better understanding of themselves as learners, and are better able to utilize their "learner's toolbox" of skills for middle school and beyond!

Digital Civilization

This course takes a uniquely progressive approach to thinking about and teaching technology, beyond what most schools refer to as "digital citizenship." This inquiry-based, hands-on class gets students thinking about what it means to live a balanced life in the age of smartphones, iPads, and omnipresent connectivity—as well as what it takes to build and program those machines. Given that middle school is the age at which most students are given cellphones, as well as the legally mandated age for participation in social networks like Facebook, 6th grade is an opportune moment to engage their connected lives directly and thoughtfully. Students in Digital Civilization explore devices and hardware, social media and networks, cyber-wellness, coding and algorithmic thinking, online learning, and gaming—with the goals of teaching mindfulness and critical thinking around technology, as well as giving students the tools to be creators and not just consumers of technology and digital media.

Seventh Grade

Mind and Body

Seventh grade is a year of continued transition from childhood to adolescence. With the transition comes the possibility of starting fresh as students gain increased understanding of themselves and others. This course explores the personal changes they are experiencing as well as the choices they increasingly face during middle school and beyond. Through group discussion, writing, simulation games, and role-plays, each student has the opportunity to develop self-confidence, learn to manage emotions, cultivate friendships, and learn decision-making and stress-management skills. Topics covered include mindfulness and stress awareness, communication, values, relationships, the teen brain, media literacy, puberty, and drugs and alcohol.

Eighth Grade

Into the Wild Workshop & Gateway Preparation

The 8th grade *Into the Wild* project is an independent and experiential student-driven exploration of a topic of personal interest. The experience is intended to be a brave and reflective journey in which each 8th grade student builds autonomy, masters new skills, applies the habits of mind and heart, and strengthens his or her sense of purpose around learning. *Into the Wild* fulfills Wildwood's mission of helping students discover their strengths, become inquisitive learners, and step confidently beyond the classroom into the wild world. The *Into the Wild* project culminates with student presentations and a celebration of learning in spring.

Following the conclusion of the Into the Wild project, 8th grade students turn their attention to preparing for their 8th grade Gateway Presentations. These presentations are an opportunity for students to demonstrate fluency and mastery of their learning by exhibiting a specific body of academic work reflecting on their 7th and 8th grade years. In preparation, students are individually coached by advisors in reviewing their academic work portfolio, identifying strengths and stretches, setting goals, and demonstrating readiness to advance to the next grade level. Gateways, delivered at the end of the school year to teachers, family and peers, are a bridge between the work completed in one division and the work that is about to begin in the next.

ELECTIVES

(This is a sampling. Not all electives are offered each semester.)

Artistic Workshop

This workshop focuses on conceiving and creating Calder-like mobiles using cardboard, foam, metal wire, paints, and other assorted materials to design and construct fabricated objects d'art.

Arts and Crafts

This is a creative class for arts-and-crafts enthusiasts focusing on a number of projects, from scrapbooking and origami to duct-tape art. Students are encouraged to explore their own new craft ideas and passion projects.

Avant-Garde Poetry

The work of the poet is to imagine a new world. In this elective, students imagine together, read poems from the bleeding edge of the American tradition, and write and share their own work.

Calligraphy, Lettering, and Fonts

This class teaches traditional calligraphy and explores various fonts and the art of lettering styles. Students create their own fonts and exhibit their work, culminating the project.

Chopped!

In "Chopped!" students discover their cooking talents and are pushed to create an edible "meal, snack ..." as the

clock ticks. Students work in groups to come up with a delicious food presentation using as many ingredients available and incorporating two “must have” ingredients. Their food is presented to another group and the instructor, and a winner is announced.

Culinary Elective

From appetizing appetizers and breakfast basics to delicious desserts, this elective teaches food fundamentals and how to bake, blend, chop, cook, decorate, make quick and easy recipes, and create healthy and/or indulgent recipes. Students write their own food blogs to document their experiences—from prep to clean up.

Digital 3-D Modeling

In this elective, students develop skill in using software to draw 3-D objects. They learn to take common shapes (like boxes and cylinders) and turn them into interesting creatures and objects like those seen in animated movies. Blender and SketchUp are two of the programs used, with the objective of learning Maya 2015—the program professionals use to draw and animate 3-D. Students will bring their designs to life using the school’s 3-D printer.

Google Sketchup

In this elective, students learn elements of designing and drafting with the tool Google SketchUp. They develop skills to create, manipulate, texture, compose, and model in this platform and design anything from a new doghouse to a new deck.

History of Black-and-White Film

Students explore the history of black-and-white film. Through watching some of the all-time classics of the film noir era, students will analyze technique, lighting, and the use of expression. At the end of the semester, they will write, direct, and produce their own black-and-white short.

History of Rock Music

Students explore the history of rock music beginning with Elvis, The Beatles, and Buddy Holly and move through the hippie/experimental music of the 70s, hair metal in the 80s, grunge and pop in the 90s, alternative music in the 2000s, and indie music popular today.

Journalism

Students “run” the student newspaper, *The Wildwood Howl*, in this class. Students contribute to the writing, editing, and graphic design of the e-version of the newspaper—which is featured as a PDF on Haiku. Students with an interest in video journalism are encouraged to report on the artistic and athletic events going on in the school community.

Knobs, Pedals, Buttons, Faders, and Pads

Students learn how to use a variety of electronic instruments for studio production and live performance, including drum machines, synthesizers, step sequencers, and effects pedals.

Mindfulness and Yoga

This course focuses on mindfulness practices: mindful breathing, eating, exercising, sleeping, and yoga. It explores methods designed to bring calm and clarity. Students learn techniques to de-stress and enjoy meditation.

Minnow Tank

In this class, students learn how to identify common, everyday problems that many people face and then pitch ideas to each other for new businesses that solve those very problems. Students watch clips of *Shark Tank* along the way to learn about smart and not-so-smart investment deals. Any viable idea might lead to a business startup by the group.

Photography

Students are exposed to various camera settings and learn greater creative and technical control. This course builds the foundation for visual literacy regarding form and content of photographic images. The elements and principles of design, as they relate to photographic composition, are emphasized. Students learn framing within the viewfinder and explore various compositional principles. Students also learn to examine images critically through critiques.

Poetry, Songs, Rules, and Formulas (PSRF)

Music, poetry, and art are often used/created to symbolize something meaningful, capture elements of beauty, and create change in the world. This class encourages and teaches students to use their creative minds (for art, music, and poetry) to create projects that will help them remember important formulas, vocabulary/grammar, rules/conventions for writing, and any general concepts necessary for Demonstrations of Knowledge. Music videos, MP3's of cool songs, or even a portfolio of symbolic art can be created to help remember important concepts ... and to have fun!

Speech and Improv

Martin Luther King Jr.'s extraordinary "Dream speech" originally did not contain the now famous passage that started with "I have a dream." King improvised much of the second half, including the "I have a dream!" proclamation. We all need to know how to prepare an exceptional speech, but what's an exceptional speech if we're not reading our audience and making improvisational adjustments while delivering it? This class explores the fundamental elements of speech writing, along with the improvisational skills necessary to deliver it.

Wildwood Wolf Readers Club

For students interested in spending the end of each week buried in the pages of a great book, the Wolf Readers Club is ideal. Students read independently, engaging in small group discussions and selecting their top selections to share with others. Building on the popularity of the Wildwood Medal at the elementary campus, the Wildwood Wolf Readers select a book for the Wildwood middle school community to read and enjoy.

TECHNOLOGY AND LIBRARY RESOURCES

In middle school, presentation skills are enhanced as students learn to use and gain fluency in software that helps them organize and showcase academic projects. All middle school students are introduced to the fundamentals of cloud computing with the use of Google Drive, allowing the use of collaborative apps such as Google Presentations, Google Docs, and Google SketchUp. Teachers use iPad apps in their coursework, ranging from life-science labs in frog dissections and examining cell structure to humanities study of the history of the Aztecs.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

In middle school, Community Involvement is part of the advisory program. In 6th grade, students focus their community involvement on the environment. Students adopt a beach through Heal the Bay. They work together to identify threats to the beach and habitat and clean the area. Found objects are brought back to school and used to create artworks and sculptures in visual arts classes.

Students in 7th and 8th grades focus on intergenerational community involvement, making connections with residents of elder-care facilities near campus. Students read, play games, perform, and engage elders in conversation about their personal histories and their own connections to the neighborhood.