

Middle School Curriculum Guide

(Grades 6-8)

2022-2023

Middle and Upper School

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Wildwood School

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Wildwood School cultivates reflective scholars, bold innovators and passionate leaders equipped with the skills, ethics and inspiration to transform their world.

Middle School Curriculum: Introduction

Wildwood's middle school curriculum offers every student intellectual and creative opportunities in an active learning environment where adolescent development is understood and fully supported. Interdisciplinary classes and programs in the humanities, STEM, world languages, and arts to tap into students' natural curiosity while satisfying their growing desire to direct their own learning and make relevant connections between the classroom and the world.

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. Along with a challenging interdisciplinary humanities course, each year of middle school includes mathematics, science, languages, arts, physical education, and a choice of electives. All teaching and learning intentionally supports students as they develop skills in inquiry, information literacy, and self-expression.

Enrichment opportunities include environmental and intergenerational community involvement, while Wildwood's Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEIB) programming explores positive identity development for every student through a range of classroom experiences, events, and clubs.

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.

Middle School Course of Study

6th grade:	7th grade:	8th grade:
Humanities 6	Humanities 7	Humanities 8
Mathematics	Mathematics	Mathematics
Science	Science	Science
Language Wheel	World Language	World Language
Arts Wheel	Elective	Elective
Physical Education	Physical Education	Physical Education
Advisory	Advisory	Advisory

Adding/Dropping Courses

The student may request to add or drop a course for a limited number of days at the beginning of the school year.

Requests to add or drop a course may be made for the following reasons:

- Gaps in the required course load
- Correction due to system errors
- Level placement for Mathematics, Science, or World Languages
 - Note: Level placement is contingent on departmental approval, placement diagnostic, completion of prerequisite courses, and/or space in the other level class.
- Desire to take a different elective

Requests to add or drop a course cannot be made for the following reasons:

- Requests for a specific teacher
- Requests for a specific block or section
- Requests for a class with specific peer

Open Add/Drop Period: Up to End of Week 3 of the School Year

During this period, the student may request to add or drop courses in their schedule. The open period is the only time during the school year when a student may add or drop a new course to their schedule.

Week 4 and On

After the Open Add/Drop Period closes at the end of Week 3, no courses may be added or dropped to a student's schedule. The school may make exceptions in the following circumstances:

- Extended illness or injury resulting in medical leave from school
- Appropriate placement of new students

Students are encouraged to consider schedule changes carefully. Changes may not be reversed after they have been finalized or may require shifts in the student's other classes to different sections/blocks and/or different teachers. Additionally, the student is responsible for completing work assigned before their arrival in the new class.

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.

Humanities 6: Ancient Civilization

Essential Question: "How can exploring ancient cultures help us understand our world today and imagine a better future?"

In Humanities, students explore the relationship between social studies, language arts, and culture. During sixth grade, that exploration focuses on the ancient world and its influence on our own modern civilizations. Throughout the year we'll cultivate the skills of being a reader, writer, researcher, historian, and critical thinker, and we'll do that with a variety of projects that are described in greater detail below. Our goal this year is that sixth graders use these skills and experiences to better understand the needs of our society, possible solutions to issues of today, and their role as change makers.

Humanities 7: Global Studies

Essential Question: "What are the challenges and benefits of independence?"

In seventh grade humanities, students will find their own answers to this question by immersing themselves in a variety of world cultures. We will examine the fight for independence in Africa, travel the Silk Road through China and India, zoom in on the pros and cons of different types of governments throughout the world, and listen to the stories of immigrants of the past and present. We will experience these cultures not only through reading literature and studying history, but also by exploring the various elements of daily life that contribute to the cultures of various communities and parts of the world. Students will get to know themselves as researchers, writers, and collaborators in a variety of assignments, including research papers, literary analysis, creative writing, and group projects. We will explore the fundamentals of grammar as well as the mechanics of writing to support the learning of bigger concepts throughout the year. Students will also gain a comprehensive knowledge of world geography as they learn the history and culture of different parts of the world. This course will build upon the work of 6th grade humanities by emphasizing empathy for others and help students gain a better understanding of their individual perspectives.

Humanities 8: United States History & Literature

Essential Question: "How does the concept of 'We' in 'We the People' expand and contract throughout United States history?"

Each course unit will explore stories that have been buried or reinterpreted throughout history, considering which voices have been acknowledged, ignored, or silenced throughout the continuing expansion of this democratic republic. A close reading of Ray Bradbury's Fahrenheit 451 reveals the disastrous consequences of a society that refuses to internally reflect and engage with difficult and novel ideas. By concurrently 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. This investigation culminates in a live debate project in which students read and cite actual Supreme Court case law in order to reinterpret and apply Constitutional principles to a modern world. Through an emphasis on multiple perspectives, students take a deep look at conflicts and compromises of a young nation's growing pains in units of study on Westward Expansion and Invasion, the Civil War and Reconstruction. Understanding the struggle for civil rights and racial equality leads students through the novel All American Boys by Jason Reynolds, which is set in the contemporary BLM movement, with

a critical look at Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird* which was written at the beginning of the civil rights movement. Using our lens of the value of multiple perspectives, students will populate the town of Maycomb with nuanced and realistic voices through the *Mockingbird Monologues* projects. 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.

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.

Math 6: Math Foundations

Sixth grade mathematics is about (1) connecting ratio and rate to whole number multiplication and division and using concepts of ratio and rate to solve problems; (2) completing understanding of division of fractions and extending the notion of number to the system of rational numbers, which includes negative numbers; (3) writing, interpreting, and using expressions and equations; and (4) developing understanding of statistical thinking.

Algebra A: Pre-Algebra

Seventh grade mathematics is about (1) formulating and reasoning about expressions and equations, including modeling an association in bivariate data with a linear equation, and solving linear equations and systems of linear equations; (2) grasping the concept of a function and using functions to describe quantitative relationships; (3) analyzing two- and three-dimensional space and figures using distance, angle, similarity, and congruence, and understanding and applying the Pythagorean Theorem.

Algebra B: 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. 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.

Science

Middle school science students will learn to engage in the ongoing process of scientific thinking by asking and reasking questions, collecting and analyzing data, and drawing conclusions rooted in evidence. They will learn to apply these skills to engineer solutions to real world (global) problems with the aim of cultivating a love of scientific investigation that will contribute to a sense of personal confidence in themselves as learners and critical thinkers.

Science 6: Physical Science

Sixth grade science is an opportunity to explore the fundamental skills of being a scientist. We'll look at the tools, the writing, the math, and the questions that drive scientific inquiry. Our experiments will help us investigate introductory elements of physics and chemistry, which are the foundations of later scientific skill building.

Science 7: Life Science

Seventh grade science will explore the complicated and fascinating topic of life. We will think about what it means for something to be "living," explore the many ways life interacts to form communities, and see how evolution has led to the vast biodiversity we see in the world around us today. In the first semester, we will cover evolution, ecology, and biological energy. In the second semester, we will focus on human biology, looking at body systems, genetics, and epidemiology. These topics will be studied through hands-on observations, experiments, and investigations. Throughout the course, you will design your own experiments, and you will build upon the skills you learned in 6th grade of writing lab reports and using different scientific instruments. By the end of the year, you will be competent scientists with a curiosity for the natural world!

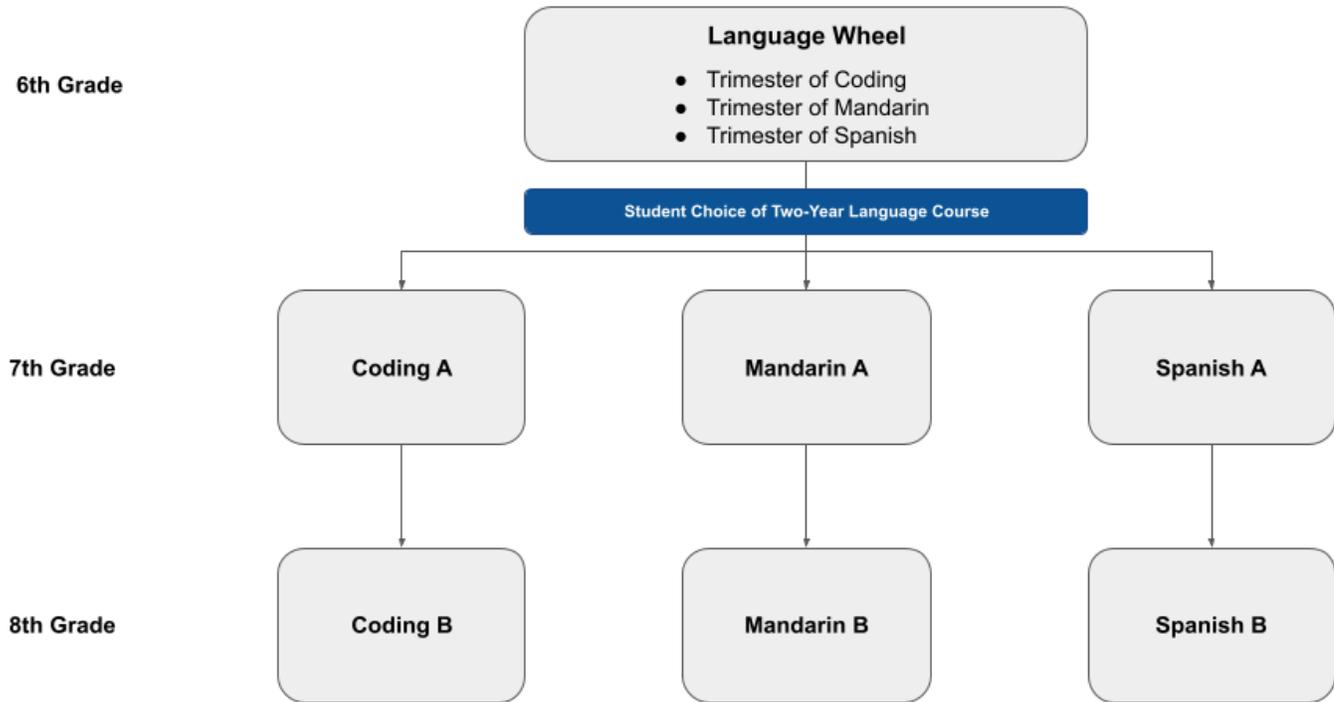
Science 8: Environmental Science

Students will use hands-on activities, collaboration, asking investigable questions and conducting experiments to explore how the science concepts of pH, photosynthesis, atmospheric composition, weather, climate, and means of production are impacting our world. Throughout the year, you will investigate predicted environmental conditions for the year 2050 to engineer your own off-the-grid homestead that is reflective of your individual environmental philosophy. Science is an essential element of environmental justice; you will build a deeper understanding by defining who the policy makers and stakeholders are in addition to identifying the role each stakeholders' bias and interests play in the decision making process. You will continually evaluate and reevaluate their thinking and responses for the following Essential Questions in every unit: 'How do increasing levels of CO2 impact the environment?' 'Is clean drinking water a human right?' 'Who are the stakeholders and policy makers of environmental science and what role do they play in decision making?' The most reflective takeaway from the course will synthesize environmental ideologies and case studies to develop and define each student's personal environmental philosophy in their answer to the Overarching Question: 'How are we connected to the environment and to each other?'

World Languages

Middle school students have the opportunity to explore three different world languages: Mandarin, Spanish, and Coding. 6th graders rotate through all three languages in the Language Wheel, which offers trimester-length samplings of each language. Students then select one of those three languages to study over the next two years in 7th and 8th grades. Students do not switch languages between 7th and 8th grades.

MIDDLE SCHOOL WORLD LANGUAGES COURSE PROGRESSION



CODING

Coding 6

The Language Wheel

This course introduces the fundamental concepts of computer programming. Students will learn to read and write code using the JavaScript programming language while exploring the basic building blocks that all computer programs are built from. All work in this class will be done using the p5.js Web Editor. Projects will primarily take the form of small graphical web applications using the p5 graphics library. Projects will generally be completed together as a group during class time.

Coding A

This course covers the core concepts of computer programming. Students will learn to write programs using multiple different programming languages, while using and exploring the fundamental code structures shared between them. Each unit focuses on one specific language and explores how different languages approach similar concepts in a unique way. Projects will be a mix of text-based console applications and simple graphics applications with mouse and keyboard input.

Coding B

This course focuses on the design process of building and writing computer programs, and developing the skills necessary to solve problems using code. Units in this course will be split into two separate programming languages. The first semester will center around the Java programming language and

focus on managing user input, complex instructions, and program structure. The second semester will primarily utilize the Python programming language with an emphasis on graphics programming and managing large amounts of data efficiently.

MANDARIN

With an emphasis on communication, each course is designed to create opportunities for students to speak, listen, read, and write Chinese 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 should be able to communicate basic daily life topics in Mandarin, demonstrating mastery of basic Chinese character writing skills and an ability to express themselves fluently and creatively in Mandarin through speaking, writing, and typing.

Mandarin 6

The Language Wheel

This course features a variety of basic topics for students to explore. Each topic introduces a vocabulary theme and simple basic daily-life dialogues. Activities to practice the learned materials include listening, speaking, and games. Reading and writing are taught but are not the focus of this course. Every topic will also include related Chinese culture. Students will also develop a basic understanding of Chinese characters writing and try writing/typing basic 20 Chinese characters as well as using different technologies to explore their learning.

Mandarin A

This course aims to introduce students with basic knowledge in Chinese. Listening, speaking, reading, and writing/typing skills will be taught with an emphasis on listening and speaking. Students will be able to exchange greetings, introduce themselves, describe their family members, friends, pets, and talk about their daily routines, transportations, colors, and clothes. Content will be introduced through visuals, songs, dialogues, online resources, etc. Students will be able to recognize 250 characters and write/type commonly used radicals and 300 characters. Chinese culture topics will also be incorporated into the curriculum and the teacher will also introduce current events to students to develop their social awareness and to establish and maintain a positive relationship with them.

Mandarin B

This course is based on Mandarin A to continue with the basic knowledge in Chinese. Listening, speaking, reading, and writing/typing skills will be developed with an emphasis on listening and speaking. Students will be able to talk about their schools, classes, favorite hobbies, sports weather, seasons, and learn how to make phone calls and order basic foods and drinks. Content will be introduced through visuals, songs, dialogues, online resources, etc. Students will be able to recognize additional 250-300 characters and write/type additional 250-300 characters. Chinese culture topics will also be incorporated into the curriculum such as Chinese traditional and national holidays and the teacher will also introduce current events to students to develop their social awareness and to establish and maintain a positive relationship with them.

SPANISH

Spanish 6

The Language Wheel

This course introduces students to Spanish language and culture. The curriculum is designed to provide an opportunity for students to explore the language by exposing them to the language and the traditions, customs, and culture of Spanish speaking countries. All vocabulary, structures and cultural points acquired in this course are introduced through stories, songs, or pictures. Students will

demonstrate competence of common and high frequency vocabulary, structures and cultural aspects through various activities that include games, acting, illustrating, creative writing, and answering direct questions. Students at this level will start to communicate on some very familiar topics using single words and phrases that they have practiced and memorized. Some topics presented in the course will include give and ask for some basic information in Spanish (name, age, origin, likes, dislikes), greet and say farewell to people, talk about family and weather as well as understand some common practices, products and perspectives of the Spanish speaking cultures.

Spanish A

In this course students gain the ability to communicate in the target language in a basic manner about familiar topics such as themselves, their school, family, leisure activities, and their city/town. Instruction is in Spanish supported by comprehensible messages and some English translation. Eventually, the goal is to remain in the target language for 80-90% of instruction time. Students' appreciation and understanding of the culture of the Spanish-speaking world will be reinforced through presentations, readings, music, and projects. There is a continued reinforcement of the linguistic skills of listening, reading, speaking and writing; with an emphasis on the first two. Spanish in MS is a two year path; by the end of the second year of Spanish, students will be able to communicate about present and possibly some past events and activities. They will also have a better understanding of the perspectives, products and practices of the Spanish-speaking world.

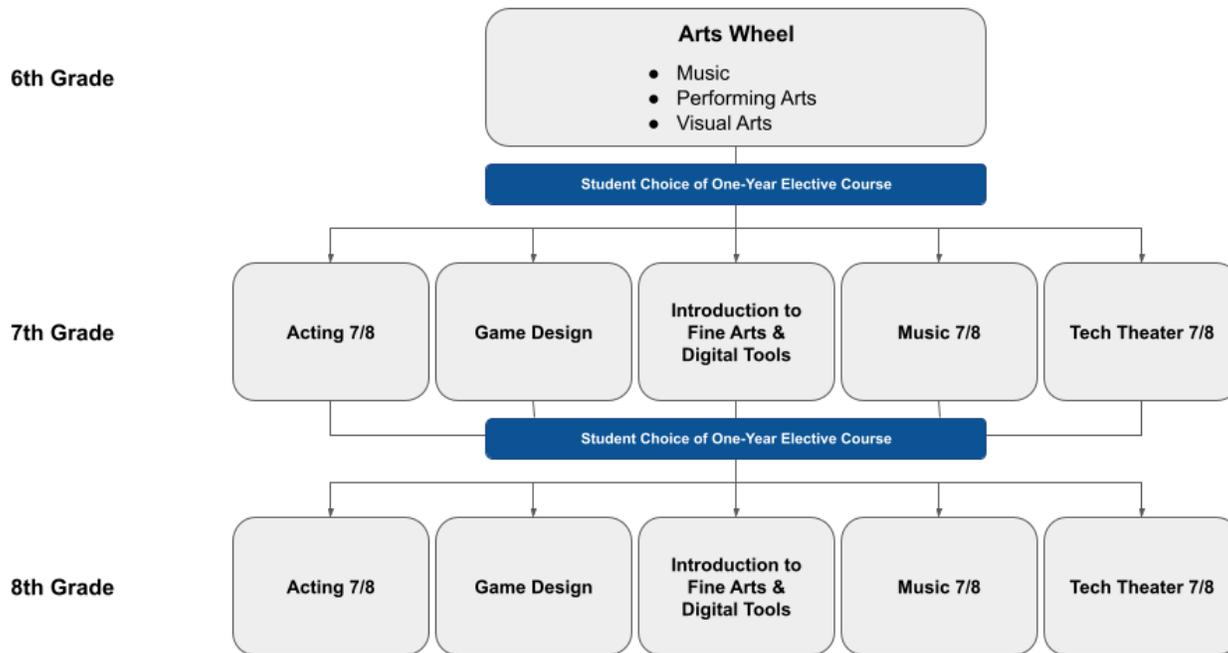
Spanish B

In this course students will reinforce and expand their ability to effectively communicate in the target language about familiar topics such as themselves, their world and surroundings. Instruction time is conducted almost entirely in Spanish through comprehensible messages. Their appreciation and understanding of the culture of the Spanish-speaking world is reinforced through presentations, readings, music, and projects. There is a continued reinforcement of the linguistic skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing. By the end of the second year of Spanish, students are able to communicate about diverse topics that comprise their daily lives. They also have a better understanding of the perspectives, products, and practices of the Spanish-speaking world.

Electives

During 6th grades, students rotate through arts courses each trimester in the Arts Wheel. This sampling of arts 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.

Seventh graders may then choose from among five electives that range across the arts and computer tech. In 8th grade, students may choose to take a second year of the same elective class or switch to a new elective.



MUSIC ELECTIVES

Music 6

The Arts Wheel

Each student learns basic techniques on ukulele, piano, bass drums, keyboards and guitar. Students also sing, and can learn trumpet, flute, clarinet, and saxophone depending on their interests. Together, students create music using ensemble instruments, learning to fill multiple distinct roles of rhythm, melody, or harmony. The chromatic scale and major and minor chords on the piano and guitar are introduced. Students create short rhythmic and melodic compositions and improvisations. They work in small groups to create original compositions and perform them for the class. They also participate in guided discussions on the role of music in society, ancient and modern.

Music 7/8

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 playing abilities. Students learn to notate music and to understand the basics 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 become acquainted with the elements of music including instrumentation, form, melody, harmony and rhythm by learning music from around the world and from the American tradition of the blues. Music 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. Students also listen to a variety of musical styles and learn to appreciate and understand music in its cultural context.

PERFORMING ARTS ELECTIVES

Performing Arts 6

The Arts Wheel

A primary goal of the 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.

Acting 7/8

Do you like to play theater games? Create characters? Improvise? Act in scenes? Maybe you're curious about how to tell a comic or dramatic story and would like to explore writing a scene or monologue to perform. You will spend the year in this class discovering your own voice as an actor and how your individual voice is an essential part of an acting ensemble (group). And if you're curious but have a little stage fright, this class will be a safe, supportive place to take creative risks and learn to grow more comfortable on stage. Come join us!

Technical Theater 7/8

Essential Questions:

What constitutes collaborative theatre design?

How may we communicate and execute our artistic plans and vision?

How does the use and selection of materials and tools contribute to a safe workspace and sustainability?

This course is an introduction to the basic terminology, techniques, and practices used in technical theatre and theatrical design. This course will provide students with a basic understanding of theatre history, theatrical architecture, creative and production team structure, and the practical application of stage design and technical production. This course will also provide some of the fundamental life skills that accompany the production design process (such as the basics of sewing, carpentry, working with electrical systems, teamwork, communication skills, etc.)

VISUAL ARTS ELECTIVES

Visual Arts 6

The Arts Wheel

Visual Arts in sixth grade introduces students to inhabit the processes of artists and designers through observation, interpretation, and experimentation of ideas and materials. Students deepen their understanding of the Elements and Principles of Art and Design—the fundamentals of effective communication and unified composition. Students build on previous skills and learn artistic conventions in drawing, painting, printmaking, 3D design, and digital media. Each project supports creative workflow grounded in an iterative envisioning process. Lessons connect to civilizations studied in Humanities, specifically about how artists are storytellers and recorders of their time. Students develop and explore their artistic voices and how to create works that express messages and hopes for an imagined future.

Introduction to Fine Arts and Digital Tools 7/8

In this year-long visual arts course, students develop their fluency in both traditional fine art and digital media, responding to a series of prompts that build skills in artistic conventions such as composition and color theory. Students learn to manipulate the Elements of Art and Principles of Design to convey personal ideas, stories, and designs through exercises in figure drawing, still life, illustrative storytelling, graphics and more. Conceptual development and artistic inquiry is supported by essential questions that deepen students' explorations of realistic, symbolic, and abstract forms of expression. These include: "How is art a reflection of our lives and of our time?" and "What makes a powerful pose?" Students keep a sketchbook to collect ideas and influences, and to practice, experiment and reflect on their creative process. Visual literacy skills are developed through the study of historical and contemporary art references. Class shares and presentations give opportunities to collaborate as an artistic community by articulating artistic intentions and giving and receiving feedback. Students are encouraged to develop individual areas of interest to apply to independent projects. Course can be repeated both years with a rotating curriculum. No prior art experience is required, just a curious mind that is willing to explore and take creative risks!

TECHNOLOGY ELECTIVES

Game Design

Students walk through the game design process, starting with paper prototyping a board or card game to examine the science and art of developing game rules. From there, the class will progress on to creating 2D arcade video games to explore concepts such as level design, progression, and pixel art. Finally, using Unity 3D, students will learn basic 3D Game design and create their own explorable worlds. Along the way, there will be additional units covering 3D modeling, sound design, programming, and graphic design.

Physical Education

The Physical Education program at Wildwood School is designed to educate minds, develop healthy bodies, and promote positive attitudes towards physical activity, fitness, and sports. Our students will learn the physical, mental and emotional skills that will provide them the confidence, ability and desire to be physically active for life in a wide range of activities.

6th and 7th Grades

The main focus in sixth and seventh grade PE is on team building and collaboration. Framed by the essential question, "How does a team work best together?" students gain awareness of productive collaboration and positive team play. Students are taught about healthy competition, respecting your opponents, and how to demonstrate good sportsmanship in all situations.

Physical coordination and general sports skills are enhanced as students rotate through a variety of units, such as cooperative games, invasion games, net sports, diamond sports, target games, and rhythmic/fitness. Emphasis in every unit is on "peer coaching", so that students with higher skills can help others improve and develop more confidence in themselves, while still continuing to grow their own individual skills.

8th Grade

In eighth grade Physical Education, students are taught the importance of goal setting and "personal bests," learning how to compete with themselves to be better than they were yesterday. Students will dive deeper into fitness concepts such as overload, progression and specificity, as well as the health and skill related components of fitness. Proper form and technique are stressed during each class as well as setting long-term personalized health and fitness goals.

In competitive game play, students are focusing on offensive and defensive strategies in order to give their team the best chance to be successful. Sportsmanship and collaboration are emphasized daily and continue to be the foundation of our classroom. Our goal is that students leave our program with the knowledge and desire to remain physically active throughout life.

Middle School Advisory Program

GRADE LEVEL ADVISORY SKILL DEVELOPMENT

6th Grade: Study Skills and Digital Cilization

Sixth grade 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. Engaging thoughtfully on social media and online in general is a vital skill for sixth graders as well. Students think about technology beyond what we might consider "digital citizenship." This inquiry-based, hands-on approach 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. Students 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 about technology, as well as giving students the tools to be creators and not just consumers of technology and digital media.

7th 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.

8th Grade: Gateway Preparation

Eighth grade students conclude their middle school experience at Wildwood with their 8th Grade Gateway Presentations. These presentations provide an opportunity for students to demonstrate fluency and mastery of their learning by exhibiting a specific body of academic work reflecting on their middle school experience. 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.

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.

ADVISORY MINI ELECTIVES

Mini electives are short courses on special topics offered during advisory times throughout students' middle school experience. The following is a sample of mini electives. Not all mini 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 workshop 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 mini-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 mini-elective 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 mini-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 3D Modeling

In this workshop, students develop skill in using software to draw 3D 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 3D. Students will bring their designs to life using the school's 3D printer.

Google Sketchup

In this mini-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 mini-elective, 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 mini-elective. 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 workshop 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 mini-elective, 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 workshop 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, MP3s 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 mini-elective 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.