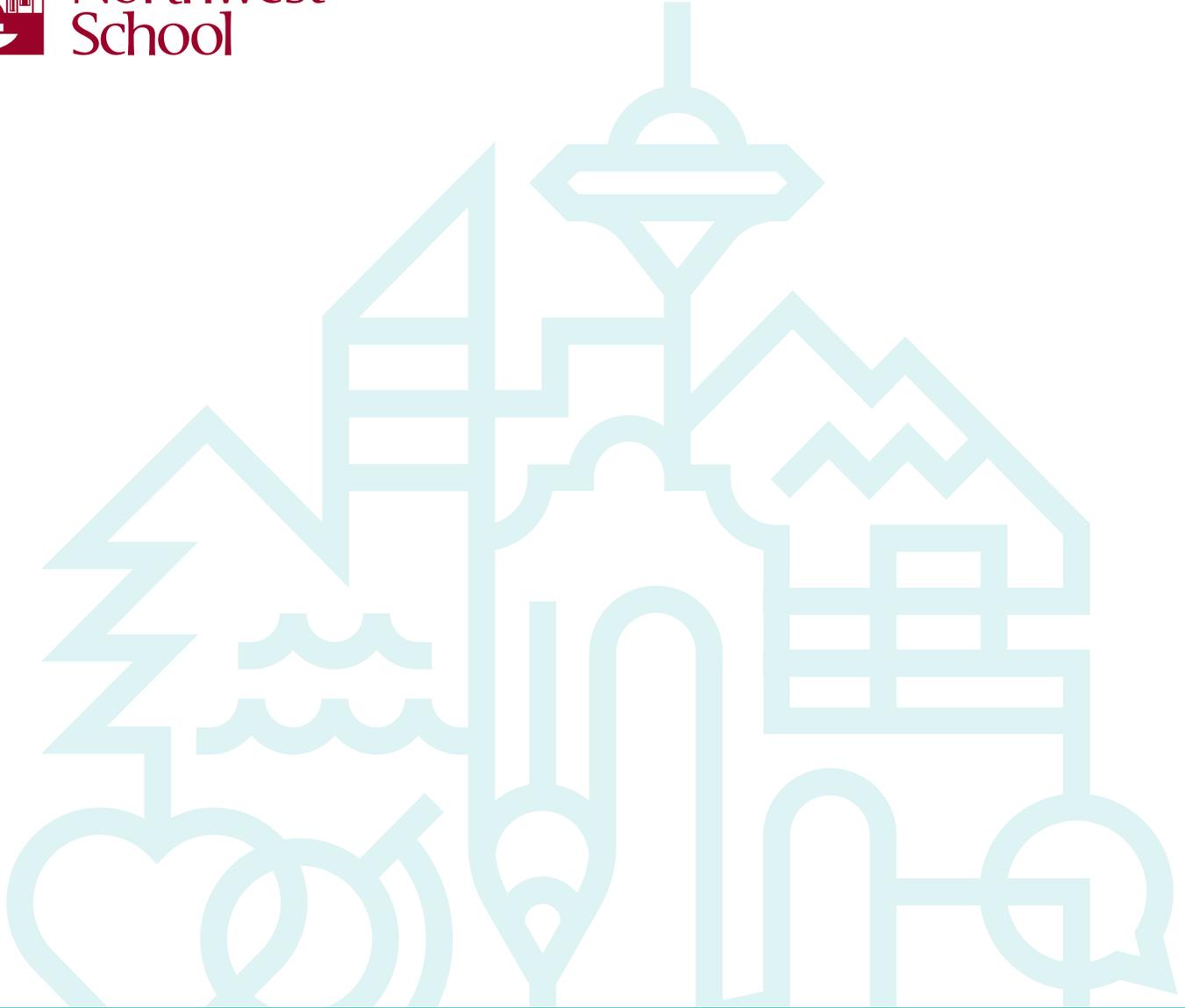




The
Northwest
School



Middle School Curriculum Guide

2022-2023



6th Grade

Arts (all students take two Arts classes)
Humanities (this is a double block, integrating history and language arts)
Foundations (includes 6 weeks of Chinese and 6 weeks of Spanish)
Math 6
Science
PE, Health and Wellness

7th Grade

Arts (all students take two Arts classes)
Humanities (this is a double block, integrating history and language arts)
Chinese or Spanish
Math 7 or Algebra 1
Science
PE, Health and Wellness

8th Grade

Arts (all students take two Arts classes)
Humanities (this is a double block, integrating history and language arts)
Chinese or Spanish
Algebra 1 or Geometry
Science
PE, Health and Wellness

Things to Note:

Arts

Two classes at all times. Students in the 6th Grade complete at least one class from each Arts discipline (Dance, Music, Visual Art, and Theatre). Students are required to take one more class in each discipline during the combined 7th and 8th Grade years.

PE, Health and Wellness

One class each trimester, with a required variety of physical education and health and wellness activities during the year. Students participating on a school sports team practice during their PE time, although most games happen after school.

Environment

Three times a week, students and faculty work in mixed-grade teams to care for the school and immediate surrounding areas. The Environment Program not only grounds the school's environmental sustainability ethic in students' immediate surroundings and daily practice, it facilitates leadership development and builds community.

6th Grade Curriculum

The 6th Grade curriculum is designed to facilitate each student's integration into The Northwest School community and to engage them fully in the process of learning. Our goal is to provide a supportive environment that challenges students to grow, both socially and academically. We focus on providing appropriate levels of support while guiding students to become independent, self-aware learners and community members.

Weekly study halls staffed by 6th Grade advisors help ease the transition from elementary school to Middle School, offering 6th Graders opportunities to seek assistance and check in with teachers while also managing their own workload. Students meet weekly in Advisory groups during which they explore a variety of topics associated with our social, academic, and community goals. Student advisors meet weekly, focusing on issues such as individual student growth and development, interpersonal group dynamics within the class, integration of curriculum, and facilitation of our service learning, digital citizenship, and diversity, equity, and inclusion work.

Humanities

Humanities 6

This course provides an interdisciplinary exploration of literature, writing, history, and geography, focusing on the human experience via themes of identity, place, and community. Each trimester, we take on a new theme and engage in projects, books, and writing – individually and cooperatively – to master new skills and content. A major emphasis in our curriculum is reading. In addition to the three major books students read, they select their own “choice books” (based on our themes), which can be chosen from book lists curated by our librarians. The intended outcome by the end of the year is that students can (1) write creative and analytical papers; (2) discuss historical, philosophical, and plot-based elements of a variety of literature; (3) analyze/interpret maps and identify constitutional laws of historical/modern time periods; (4) collaborate effectively with other students on projects and discussions; and (5) practice social emotional strategies (e.g., R.U.L.E.R.) that encourage seeing emotions as intrinsically connected to learning. The majority of content in 6th Grade is built around writing, reading, geography, history, and social/emotional learning (SEL) skills – all of which will be useful for students as they progress through each grade level.

Mathematics

Math 6

The course begins with a study of area and surface area concepts. Next, students begin study of ratios, rates, and percentages with an introduction using representations such as number line diagrams, tape diagrams, and tables. Student understanding of these concepts expands by exploring fraction and decimal representations of rational numbers. They explore sums, differences, products, and quotients using intuitive methods and efficient algorithms. Next, students are introduced to equations and expressions including finding solutions for linear equations in one variable and basic equations involving exponents. Student understanding of ratios and rates combined with a basic understanding of equations leads them to study proportional relationships with special emphasis on circumference and area of a circle as an example and nonexample of proportional relationships. This is followed by looking at percentage concepts and applications such as sales tax, tipping, and markup.

Science

General Science

This course introduces students to the myriad opportunities for scientific study through thematic units that revolve around the theme of Energy.

Emphasis is placed on scientific inquiry, engineering challenges, independent and group projects, and creative problem solving. Students will learn research and reporting skills, as well as laboratory inquiry and safety skills, and are challenged to design experiments in order to answer their own questions about how things work.

The goal is for each student to see themselves represented in a scientific field and to imagine that there are many STEM fields available to them if they choose.

Sample units:

- Skills of the scientist
- Who can be a scientist—challenging stereotypes
- Coding topics
- Engineering design
- Energy forms and sources
- Electricity and circuits
- Chemistry topics and laboratory skills

Modern Languages

Foundations

Foundations is a yearlong course that will prepare 6th Grade students for the academic and technological demands of Middle School and introduce them to two modern languages. Students will learn study and self-regulation skills, including time management, planning, study strategies, organization, goal setting, and metacognition. These skills will be applied to their work in other courses. Students will also develop their proficiency with digital tools, including Northwest's learning management system, Canvas, and a variety of project management tools, digital authoring tools, and collaborative technologies that are necessary for their academic success across the subject areas. Over the course of the year, students will also receive 6 weeks of instruction in both Spanish and Mandarin Chinese so they can more intentionally choose their language pathway starting in 7th Grade.

Arts

As core classes, the arts form a central element of our 6th Grade experience. Students dive into the arts with introductory classes in each of our four arts disciplines: Dance, Music, Theatre, and Visual Arts. In addition, 6th Graders are encouraged to follow their passion or explore new mediums in one of our many cross-graded classes.

7th Grade Curriculum

The 7th Grade is designed to meet students where they are in both their personal and academic growth. We leverage students' natural curiosity, their developmental process of identity formation, their need to connect to peers and the wider community, and their strong sense of justice. In the classroom and larger program, we engage students in a balance of independent and collaborative work, inquiry-based thinking, and creative projects. We celebrate the 7th Grade's place as the "middle of the middle," treating it as an opportunity for students to look at both where they have been and where they are going while at the same time honoring exactly where they are now.

Humanities

Humanities 7 and Washington State History

7th Grade Humanities focuses on the continued development of reading and writing skills. Students work on creative, non-fiction, and reflective writing while receiving guidance and practice in grammar, vocabulary, and revision skills. Concurrently, students work on reading skills as they explore a variety of texts, most of which are chosen for their connection to our larger curriculum. The Social Studies component of 7th Grade Humanities focuses on the history of the Pacific Northwest. This includes a study of different events, people, cultures, explorations, and migrations that impacted the Northwest. We examine what happens when different groups inhabit the same space, and we develop better understandings by exploring a variety of perspectives over the centuries. Research skills are also a significant part of the 7th Grade Humanities curriculum. Students learn and practice a variety of research skills each term, including reading for information, synthesizing information from a variety of sources, using databases, and properly citing sources.

Mathematics

Math 7

Students begin the course with rational numbers less than zero expanding their understanding of arithmetic to negative numbers. Next, students begin the study of linear equations with one and two variables and deepen their understanding of equivalent expressions. They then build on their understanding of proportional relationships from the previous course to study linear relationships. They express linear relationships using equations, tables, and graphs, and make connections across these representations. They extend the definition of exponents to include all integers, and in the process, codify the properties of exponents. They learn about orders of magnitude and scientific notation to represent and compute with very large and very small quantities.

Science

Life Science 7

This course is a survey of the life sciences and is grounded in the Next Generation Science Standards. Each unit helps students to build proficiency in science and engineering practices and seeks to make connections between science domains using crosscutting concepts.

- Adolescent Brain Development and Mindfulness – How do adolescent brains develop, and how can we use mindsets and mindfulness to become our best self?
- Adolescence, Relationships, and Identity – What changes happen in the teen body, and how can we create healthy relationships with ourselves and others?
- Cells and Systems – How do eggs become chickens and other living things?
- Metabolic Reactions and Digestion – How do things inside our bodies work together to make us feel the way we do?
- Matter Cycling and Photosynthesis – Where does food come from, and where does it go next?
- Ecosystem Dynamics – How does changing an ecosystem affect what lives there?
- Genetics and Human Reproductive System/Sex Ed. – Why are living things different from one another?
- Natural Selection and Common Ancestry – How could things living today be connected to the things that lived long ago?

Modern Languages

Spanish 1

This course is designed for students with little or no background in Spanish. Spanish is the primary language of instruction. The course focuses on teaching the 5 C goal areas of the ACTFL guidelines: Communication, Cultures, Connections, Comparisons, and Communities. Students engage in a variety of listening, reading, writing, and speaking activities. The class teaches basic skills and communication through the following topics: introductions and simple conversation, numbers, the alphabet, the weather, hobbies, and activities, sharing personal information, school classes and activities, diversity of people and languages in Latin America, future plans, and present tense verb conjugations. At the end of this course, students will reach the ACTFL Novice Mid level of oral proficiency and will have acquired the following language skills: ask and answer basic questions, make self-introductions, and describe likes and dislikes.

Chinese 1

This course is an introduction to standard Chinese (Mandarin Chinese). Students learn the Pinyin Romanization system and use acquired oral language skills in a variety of activities and games. While our focus is primarily on oral proficiency, students learn to read and write basic Chinese characters and to recognize these words in context. At the end of this course, students will reach the ACTFL Novice Mid level of oral proficiency and will have acquired the following language skills: ask and answer basic questions, make self-introductions, and describe likes and dislikes. In addition, students will deliver short oral presentations in Chinese, two cultural presentations, and engage in short reading and writing activities. These skills are employed within the framework of familiar contexts such as family, leisure activities, home and school life, and Chinese food, festivals, and traditions. Films viewed may include *The Road Home (Wo de fuqin muqin)* and *Beijing Bicycle (Shiqi sui de danche)*, which give insight into Chinese family life and society in both rural and urban communities. Both films will be watched with English subtitles, occasionally focusing on the Chinese dialogue for comprehension.

Arts

As core classes, the arts form a central element of our 7th Grade experience. With two arts at all times, students have the opportunity to dive deep into what they are most passionate about while also exploring new creative outlets. Arts classes are cross-graded and range from introductory to advanced levels in each of our four arts disciplines: Dance, Music, Theatre, and Visual Arts. Students are required to take one class in each discipline during the combined 7th and 8th Grade years.

8th Grade Curriculum

The 8th Grade curriculum is designed to support and engage all students as they step into leadership roles and complete their final year of Middle School. We work with students to help them foster a deepening sense of ownership over their learning as they move toward self-advocacy. The goal is to equip students with the skills and tools needed for the challenges of 8th Grade while preparing them for the challenges of Upper School and beyond.

Humanities

Humanities 8

8th Grade Humanities is a global history and literature course that focuses on three regions of the world, West Africa, the Caribbean, and South Asia as case studies for exploring the interplay between geography, history, culture, literature, and the arts. The course begins with a brief unit in which we introduce the course's core skills through the study of a country currently on the students' consciousness because of recent political or world events. For the 2021–2022 school year, our introductory unit focused on Afghanistan. In each unit, we cover foundational skills for studying history and literature: note taking, identifying reliable sources for research, annotation, summary and synthesis, analytical reasoning, argumentative writing, and creativity. In our units, we study a range of artifacts from ancient and modern literature and poetry, music and artwork, and primary sources, to scholarly articles to examine the historical and cultural causes and consequences that have contributed to the political realities of each region. We work to hone and develop these foundational skills throughout the year centered around contexts and literatures from the countries of Nigeria, The Dominican Republic, and India.

Mathematics

Algebra I

This course builds the mathematical foundation to all other Upper School math courses. Students move on to expand their understanding of linear equations, inequalities, and systems of linear equations and inequalities. They use these representations to model relationships and constraints but also reason with them abstractly. Students write, rearrange, evaluate, and solve equations and inequalities, explaining and validating their reasoning with increased precision. Students deepen their understanding of functions and their ability to represent, interpret, and communicate about them—using function notation, domain and range, average rate of change, and features of graphs. They also see categories of functions, starting with linear functions (including their inverses) and piecewise-defined functions (including absolute value functions), followed by quadratic functions. For each function type, students begin their investigation with real-world and mathematical contexts, look closely at the structural attributes of the function, and analyze how these attributes are expressed in different representations. The course ends with a close look at quadratic equations. Students extend their ability to use equations to model relationships and solve problems. They develop their capacity to write, transform, graph, and solve equations—by reasoning, rearranging equations into useful forms, and applying the quadratic formula. In solving quadratic equations, students encounter rational and irrational solutions, providing an opportunity to deepen their understanding of the real number system.

Science

Earth Science 8

The goal of this course is for students to gain a basic understanding of planet Earth's systems and characteristics as we understand them today. Topics covered include the history of science, oceanography, the atmosphere, erosion and soil development, and plate tectonics. Class discussions focus on the interaction between humans and these systems. Emphasis is placed on hands-on activities, cooperating on group projects, development of lab skills, and using the scientific method. The text is *Earth, What's Inside?* (published by Cengage Learning), in addition to references from past and current periodicals and various other texts.

Modern Languages

Spanish 8

Spanish 2 is taught exclusively in Spanish, and focuses on consolidating the skills learned in Spanish 1 while adding new vocabulary and grammatical structures. Students continue to develop the capacity to communicate in Spanish by listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Through readings in the textbook and supplementary materials, students continue to expand their knowledge about Latin American countries and Spain. At the end of this course, students will reach the ACTFL Intermediate Low level of oral proficiency and will be able to discuss topics such as daily routine, food, celebrations and traditions, technology, and a visit to the doctor, in both the present and past tenses.

Arts

As core classes, the arts form a central element of our 7th Grade experience. With two arts at all times, students have the opportunity to dive deep into what they are most passionate about while also exploring new creative outlets. Arts classes are cross-graded and range from introductory to advanced levels in each of our four arts disciplines: Dance, Music, Theatre, and Visual Arts. Students are required to take one class in each discipline during the combined 7th and 8th Grade years.

Library Skills Curriculum

The goal of our Library Program is to ensure that students and faculty efficiently find and effectively use information from both print and digital sources, and become life-long readers. To that end, the Middle School Library Instructional Program is completely curriculum-based and informed by the American Library Association's information literacy standards. The Librarian collaborates regularly with the Middle School Humanities faculty to develop independently chosen reading projects. The Librarian sponsors all-school Drop Everything and Read events and a Middle School Book Club for students.

The Librarian collaborates with Middle School faculty to develop and assess assignments and, along with the Educational Technology Coordinators, work closely to integrate information literacy skills and digital citizenship awareness into the curriculum. Beginning in 6th Grade, and continuing through 8th Grade, students develop skills in identifying and interpreting information, organizing data, producing research projects, and evaluating their process and final products. Using a wide variety of print and electronic resources, students conduct research in all disciplines: Humanities, Sciences, Languages, and the Arts.

Technology Integration

The focus of our 1:1 laptop program and technology integration model is to help students use computers with ease and confidence and to facilitate more effective and efficient learning. Rather than teaching technology as a separate subject, students acquire computer skills in the context of our interdisciplinary content-based curriculum. The Educational Technology Coordinators, Librarians, and Middle School teachers coordinate technology-enhanced lessons and projects for students. New technologies are incorporated into the curriculum when appropriate.

By the end of Middle School, our students will:

- Store, share, and access work at school and at home.
- Employ multiple methods of publishing work online and understand how to use permissions to limit the audience of any work.
- Conduct research using digital resources, including databases and other credible online sources.
- Use digital tools, note taking, and citations to enhance the research process.
- Identify bias and misinformation.
- Use productivity software (Microsoft Office) and other digital tools to interpret data, create presentations, and support the interpretation of research and ideas.
- Use a variety of multimedia tools (video, graphics, etc.) in the production and presentation of projects.
- Use computers independently and cooperatively.

Designed to offer significant experience in the transformative power of the arts, our curriculum includes two arts classes at all times. With a dynamic range of options and many classes changing every trimester, students have the opportunity to take up to six different art classes each year.

During the Middle School years, students take at least two classes in each of our four disciplines: Dance, Music, Theatre, and Visual Arts. This includes an introductory class in each discipline as part of the 6th Grade experience, and one more class in each discipline during the combined 7th and 8th Grade years.

Dance

Jump into Dance (6th Grade)

No prior dance experience necessary! Through an emergent and collaborative process, students in this one-trimester course will learn how to construct original dances based on their interests—using imagination and aspiration as guiding creative principles. Students will learn the fundamental concepts of dance vocabulary, including Space, Time, Energy/Force, Bodies, and Movement. Dancers will learn to create locomotor and non-locomotor movement sequences based on six movement qualities:

- Sustained—slow, smooth, continuous, even
- Percussive—sudden, sharp, choppy, jagged
- Swinging—sway, to and fro, pendulum, undercurve
- Suspended—stillness, balance, high point
- Collapsed—fall, release, relax
- Vibratory—shake, tremble, wiggle

And, we will have fun while we make art together!

Authentic Jazz

Jazz dance includes influences from African and Latin dances as well as swing and even ballet. In this course, students will learn the history of jazz dance including its roots in African American Social Dance, Lindy Hop, and theater dance. Students will learn upbeat and energetic dances such as the Shim Sham and the Charleston. They will try out classic moves like Apple Jacks, Mess Around, and Tacky Annie in addition to learning choreography and creating their own. Dancers will work as an ensemble and perform for the community.

Community Modern Dance

With no prior dance experience needed, this single trimester class will explore the idea of community engagement through a danced context. Students will learn dance through a class* based on the Lester Horton Modern Dance technique. One of the founding dance methodologies of the Alvin Ailey Dance organization, this strengthening and building technique creates long-lived dancers by teaching the student how to dance from the inside-out. Additionally, we will create a group dance based on the students' interests and values they hold in school and at home—and we will have fun while doing this work! Class will include:

- A thorough warm-up that embodies the Lester Horton movement vocabulary (eg. flat-back, leg swing, etc.)
- Focus on the lines of the body and movement through space and time, while using appropriate energy to execute
- Center standing barre and seated floor barre
- Across the floor (leg swings, triplets, etc.)
- Mirroring exercises
- Collaborative, student-centered choreography
- Informal performances in our surrounding community

Dance for Musical Theater

The dance scenes in a play or movie advance the plot, bring a period to life, or reveal a character. In this class, students learn dances from different musicals that serve each of these purposes. They will also create some choreography of their own and perform for the community. The class offers excellent training for actors.

Commercial Dance

Commercial dance is associated with show business and pop culture. Commercial dance is about entertaining the audience and telling stories. This includes dances for TV shows, commercials, music videos, movies, popular dance trends, and more. This style requires versatility. Students will learn dances with movements from jazz, modern, hip-hop and funk styles. They will dive in and explore quick sharp isolations and syncopated rhythms. They will create long lines and crisp shapes with their bodies, as well as leaps, jumps, and turns. Dancers will work as an ensemble and perform for the community.

Middle School Dance Ensemble

This is an intensive, year-long course with an emphasis on performance and leadership. The course is designed to strengthen each participant's dance and movement technique, choreographic skills, and artistry, while also building collaboration and ensemble skills. The class explores a variety of contemporary movement forms. Strong commitment and dedication to the creative process are essential for this class. This is a great class for students who want to deepen their commitment to dance.

Music

Bands

Intro to Band (6th Grade)

This course is open to all 6th Grade students, with or without experience. In this class, students will learn the essential elements of music through the hands-on experience of playing wind instruments including flute, clarinet, trumpet, or trombone (other instruments may be available by permission of the teacher). Students will learn note and rhythm reading and will gain listening skills vital to playing in an ensemble in addition to critical skills of personal musicianship. We will also explore composition, chamber ensembles, and music around the world. **This is a year-long class, offered in the C block of trimesters 1 and 2, and transitions to MS Band in the H block of trimester 3.**

Middle School Band

This course is open to all Middle School students who play a band instrument and have prior experience of at least one year. In this class, students will learn the essential elements of music through the hands-on experience of playing wind instruments including flute, clarinet, trumpet, or trombone (other instruments may be available by permission of the teacher). Students will learn note and rhythm reading and will gain listening skills vital to playing in an ensemble. **This is a year-long class, offered in the H block. Prerequisite: completion of Intro to Band or permission of instructor by audition.**

Symphonic Band

Students in this course will continue the study of an instrument of the band with the goals of improving their ability to simultaneously read and play music, deepen understanding of musicianship and artistic expression, and collaborate within the ensemble to prepare advanced Middle School band repertoire from a variety of genres. The band will perform each trimester in required concerts. **This is a one-trimester course, offered in the 7/8 art block, trimester 3. Placement in this course is at the discretion of the director based on effort, ability, and performance during trimester 1.**

Choirs

Middle School Choir

This course focuses on singing in a collaborative group context. Teamwork, engaged participation, and positive attitude are emphasized in addition to learning proper vocal technique. The choir will sing songs from a wide variety of styles, eras, and cultures. The choir will perform 1-2 times per trimester. The first trimester is experiential, and choristers who are interested in pursuing more in-depth learning can sign up for trimester 2-3. Singers of all ability levels are welcome and encouraged to join us in chorus! **Offered in the 6/7/8 arts block, trimester 1.**

Middle School Show-Choir

This advanced course focuses on singing in a collaborative group context. Teamwork, engaged participation, and positive attitude are emphasized in addition to learning proper vocal technique. The choir will sing songs from a wide variety of styles, eras, and cultures focusing on singing in 2-3 part music. The choir will perform 1-2 times per trimester. Trimester 2 through 3 focuses on more in-depth choral music learning. A focus will be concentrated on singing/choreography/performance. Singers are welcome and encouraged to join us! **Offered in the 6/7/8 arts block, trimesters 2-3.**

Orchestras

Introduction to String Instruments (6th Grade)

In this class, students dive straight into the power of music through hands-on experience playing stringed instruments. In addition to gaining basic proficiency on an instrument and learning to read the written language of music, students develop the unique teamwork found in performing with an ensemble. **This is a year-long course, offered in the 6th Grade art block.**

Middle School Orchestra (6th/7th/8th Grade)

Open to musicians playing orchestral instruments, the Middle School Orchestra combines experienced musicians with graduates of the Intro to Strings class. Our work focuses on advancing technique, increasing music reading skills, and developing independence within the ensemble. Repertoire is chosen to fit the players, and will include classical, chamber, and popular music. This course includes a unit on conducting, and each student will get a chance to direct the ensemble. **This is a year-long class, offered in the 6/7/8 art block. Audition required:** *New members are asked to play two minutes from any piece of your choosing, any major scale, and easy music reading provided at the audition. Your prepared piece may be any solo or excerpts from previously learned orchestra music. Information about audition appointments is available at registration.*

Spitfire Strings

A dynamic, conductorless chamber ensemble, the Spitfire Strings is a student-driven performing group of intermediate and advanced musicians playing repertoire spanning all genres, from baroque and classical to pop tunes and movie scores. Spitfire Strings is designed for instrumentalists who have achieved proficiency on their instrument, can read music, and enjoy performing. While violin, viola, cello, and bass are the core of Spitfire Strings, other musicians who can read music and envision themselves in this ensemble, including pianists, harpists, woodwind and brass players, classical guitar players, percussionists, and more, are welcome to audition. Practice outside of class time is essential, and private lessons are highly recommended. Performances include representing the school in various events, busking around Seattle, community outreach, and evening events such as Winter Concert, ArtsFest, and Spring Concert. **This is a year-long class, offered in the 6/7/8 art block.**

Popular Musics

Popular Music

This class will explore the various realms of popular music, exploring its use in media and the effect it has on mood, emotions, and storytelling. Students will research and present on a variety of popular music topics, learn fundamental musical skills, and use the music production website BandLab to create and record their own music. The course will finish with an online portfolio of each student's work. **Offered in the 7/8 art block, trimester 3.**

Theatre Arts

Intro to Theatre (6th Grade)

This class explores foundations of the art of theatre through creative drama, improvisation, and other interdisciplinary arts activities. Students learn to use their "theatre voice" to express aspects of their identity and their community. All 6th Grade students are placed in this class in either the 6th Grade art block or the 6/7/8 art block, depending on their music choice.

MS Theatre Collective (7th/8th Grade)

Trimester 1: Ancestral Storytelling

Trimester 2: Suzuki and Viewpoints

Trimester 3: Young Playwrights Program

This is a one-trimester course designed to strengthen each student's theatrical and acting technique while building an ensemble and a sense of community. Students work toward sharing performances that are based in Applied Theatre pedagogy, with a strong concentration around critical thinking, student centered dialogue, and social justice issues that matter most to students. This class offers different forms and methodologies of theatre each trimester and provides students with the opportunity to perform in small groups and individually in solo projects.

Intro to Stage Technology

Have you ever watched a blockbuster movie, walked past a treehouse or a skyscraper and wondered, "How'd they build that?" Intro to Stage Technology offers students the opportunity to find out! Using the theater as laboratory, students explore the tools and technologies used to build our world. Covering carpentry, electricity, sewing, painting, and even digital tools like 3D modeling, video, and sound production, students discover ways to turn their imaginations into reality. **Offered in the 7/8 art block, trimester 1.**

Stage Design and Technology

Creating great theater is only the beginning. In Middle School Stage Design & Technology, students learn how to work together as a mighty team. Each student's talents and imagination are unique, and discovering how to use them in collaboration with peers is the essence of our work in the theater. Not only do we work as a team in class, but we're part of a larger team with our friends in Middle School Theatre Production. Together, we create magic! In this class, students are an integral member of a company of designers, inventors, and craftspeople. With imagination and a willingness to put hands to work, there's nothing we can't create! **Offered in the 7/8 art block, trimesters 2 and 3.**

Theatre Production (7th/8th Grades)

This is a full-year course designed to strengthen each student's theatrical and acting techniques while building an ensemble and a sense of community through live performance. Students audition, rehearse, and work toward sharing performances of full-length plays and musicals. Our performances are based in Applied Theatre pedagogy, with a strong concentration around critical thinking, student centered dialogue, and social justice issues that matter most to students. This class collaborates directly with the Stage Design and Technology class to create full and innovative productions. We empower theatre students to inspire positive change and transformation in the world they want to be active participants in. **Audition required**

Visual Arts

Introduction to Visual Art (6th Grade)

This is a class designed for every 6th Grader as a way to lay down the foundation of the Visual Arts program at The Northwest School. Students learn about the elements of art (line, color, texture, shape, and form) through a variety of projects. This class pushes students to explore and develop ideas and communicate self-expression through drawing, painting, sculpture, collaging, photography, digital drawing, and more. Sixth Graders in this class do daily drawing assignments in their sketchbooks, are introduced to new vocabulary, learn about contemporary and historically relevant artists, and end the class with a large group project. **Offered trimesters 1, 2 and 3.**

Ceramics

This exciting and challenging hands-on ceramics course is an introduction to the basics of ceramics/ pottery. No experience is required, and students may take ceramics more than once in Middle School. With each class, we embark on new, creative, diverse projects that encourage students to be in control of the direction of their work. We learn and employ the elements and principles of art and design as we create and explore the vast world of art. We experiment with both ceramic sculpture and functional pottery (like cups, vases, and bowls). To glaze our masterpieces, we have more than 40 colorful and mesmerizing glazes to choose from. Occasionally, we integrate new materials into our artwork, including a bit of metal, wire, and melted glass. Our clay easily washes off, doesn't stain clothes, and students can keep (or gift) whatever they make! Let's get started and make our ceramic dreams come true!

Landscape Art

Landscapes are usually artworks that portray a view of the natural land, sometimes combined with the sea. In visual art, landscapes can also be real or imagined. Students in this class will learn techniques and ideas for portraying different types of landscapes in art projects using acrylic and watercolor paints, collage, tooling metal, oil pastels, markers, and cardboard. Students will make a landscape painting of a view they choose, a tooling metal "landscape postcard," a cardboard sculptural landscape, a collaged recycled paper landscape, and a tunnel book of a landscape. We will look at images of, and learn about, landscape art from a variety of contemporary and historic landscape artists for inspiration. **Offered trimester 1.**

Art and Architecture

This class will explore the way visual art intersects with architecture. We will look at pictures of, and learn about, contemporary and historic world architecture for inspiration. Projects will include drawing buildings in perspective, studying gargoyles and making a clay gargoyle sculpture, and creating sculptural models of buildings. Materials we will use include drawing pencils, paints, wood, wire, paper mache, recycled and scrounged stuff, and clay. **Offered trimester 1.**

Animals in Art

We will use animals as inspiration for making drawings, block prints, paintings, and sculptures. Art materials we will work with include paints, paper mache, printing inks, drawing materials, wire, and other art materials. Students will learn and practice creative techniques for using these materials. If they would like, students can choose an animal as a focus for their artwork in the class, or they can use a variety of animals in their projects. We will be studying examples of animal images in art from different parts of the world and from different time periods for inspiration. **Offered trimester 2.**

Art & the Environment

This class will explore how the natural environment serves as inspiration for making art. We will look at examples of paintings, sculptures, earthworks, and art installations from many cultures and time periods as we explore connections between art making and the natural environment. Projects we will create include real and imagined landscape drawings and paintings, a trash painting, a new ecology flag design, an environmental superhero mixed materials sculpture, a miniature sculpture for our school environment, a recycled materials folded artist book, and coffee paintings. Materials we will work with include recycled materials, paper mache, wire, oil pastels, and watercolor paints, and students can learn how to use these materials for the first time or learn new techniques for working with them. **Offered trimester 2.**

The Art of Trees and Plants

Explore trees and plants as inspiration for making artwork. Draw a line of trees using one point perspective. Make a portrait of your life based on drawing tree rings. Needle-felt a tree or plant design. Design a treehouse and build a sculpture of it using paper mache, wood, and wire. Study the beautiful tree paintings of British Columbia artist Emily Carr, and find inspiration in pictures of ink drawings of trees created in China 600 years ago. Work with a variety of materials including colored wool, watercolor paint, acrylic paint, paper mache, cardboard, and colored pencils, printing inks, and oil pastels. **Offered trimester 2.**

Design a City

What makes a good city for all kinds of people? Types of transportation? Schools? Parks? Shopping? Interesting architecture? Recycling? We will look at all of these possibilities as we make art projects inspired by this question. Our art projects will include maps, designs, and sculptures of buildings, a sculpture of a transit center, a model of a school, and a design of a city block. We will work with charcoal, acrylic and watercolor paint, markers, cardboard, wire, printmaking inks, and clay to create the art projects. Students will learn and practice creative techniques for using these art materials. **Offered trimester 3.**

Digital Comics

Students will learn how to write, illustrate, and appreciate comics with a focus on making comics using Procreate® and Adobe® Photoshop® on iPad Pros. This course explores how to craft a comic story and how to create interesting and engaging characters. We will explore character design, action, sound effects, panel layout, and drafting stories. Students will be creating their characters, designing original comic artwork, and telling stories that take readers on a journey through sequential panels of artwork. By the end of the trimester, students will have better developed their creativity, imagination, communication skills, collage skills, and drawing skills. No experience necessary. Students who have enjoyed comic book art or digital art will love this class! **Offered in the 7/8 Grade art block, trimester 1.**

Stop Motion Animation

In this class, students will create two-dimensional and three-dimensional “desktop” stop motion animation artworks using a range of media and materials. As students create their own animations, they will gain skills in cinematography, puppet design, collage, drawing, storyboarding, and audio design. We will study historical and contemporary animation examples. Students will learn to use OSnap Pro®, Garage Band®, and Adobe® Rush® on iPad Pros. They will create individual and collaborative projects. No experience necessary! This class builds creativity and critical thinking skills while establishing lifelong confidence to experiment with all forms of animation. **Offered in the 7/8 Grade art block, trimester 1.**

Book Art: Zines

Do you like to write stories with a pen and pencil, make drawings on paper, or print your own original publications to share with your friends? If so, the zines class is perfect for you! Zines are independent, small-scale publications that use simple and affordable publishing techniques to share art, stories, comics, and ideas. In this class, we will create and share zines. Materials will include pens, pencils, paper, collage materials, scanners, copy machines, and simple bookbinding techniques. In each unit, we will study examples of zines in a range of techniques, genres, and visual storytelling styles. As students create their own zines, they will build new skills in drawing, collage, graphic design, and bookmaking. This class is particularly relevant to students who are looking for a creative and powerful way to tell stories and share social justice messages. No experience necessary. Offered in the 7/8 Grade art block, trimester 2.

Digital Animation

In this class, students will learn to appreciate and create short digital animations with sound. Animation and motion design projects in this class will incorporate a range of experimental digital image-making skills including digital drawing, digital collage, working with layers, and using animation timelines. The primary software we will use is Procreate® on an iPad Pro. There will be options to work with Adobe® Photoshop® or Adobe® Animate®. We will explore animation for character animation, motion graphics, and fine art animation. There is no experience necessary, but students who enjoy digital art, stop motion animation, or digital comics will love this class! Offered in the 7/8 Grade art block, trimester 3

Physical Education Curriculum

The Physical Education (PE) program in Middle School offers a wide variety of individual and team sports and activities for athletes of all abilities and experience levels.

Some activities are offered multiple trimesters, but most classes are seasonal.

Interscholastic sports teams practice during the school day in their PE Class. Games are played outside the school day, usually right after school. Teams may play on any day of the week. In addition to skills learning and development, students work on building self-confidence, developing health and wellness tools, preventing injury, and cooperating with classmates and teammates. Course offerings are planned as listed below, but are subject to change due to facility availability and staffing needs.

We have two separate classes for Middle School PE: 6th Grade PE and a combined 7th/8th Grade PE class. This means that 6th Graders will play on teams that are only made up of 6th Graders, while team sports and variety PE classes for 7th and 8th Graders will be mixed grade classes/teams.

Student Requirements

- Students take physical education during all three trimesters during 6th, 7th, and 8th Grades.
- To facilitate our goal of engaging all new students in a fun and supportive “team” experience, all 6th Grade students have a choice to be enrolled in either cross country or soccer during the fall season. If they are not comfortable playing in games or running in meets, students are allowed to be “practice players.” Starting in the winter season of their 6th Grade year and continuing until the end of 8th Grade, all students signed up for teams are expected to play in games.
- Students take only one class at a time so they can participate in either a team sports class or one of our other classes, but not both simultaneously.

Interscholastic Teams/Sports Class Offerings

The Northwest School competes with other schools and teams in soccer, basketball, ultimate, cross country, volleyball, and track and field. Students have practices during their scheduled physical education class times. Games and meets generally take place on weekdays immediately after school.

Soccer Teams

Students do not have to be seasoned and skilled soccer players to join a team here. Beginners and club players are both welcome and encouraged. Soccer shoes, shin guards, and shorts are needed. Games take place during the week after school. Teams may be divided into squads by skill and are set up to meet the needs of both beginners and highly experienced players. **Offered in the fall season.**

Cross Country Team

There are four great reasons to run cross country: to get in great shape; visit beautiful places (as students run in multiple places around Seattle); participate in some exciting competitions (one or two 1.5 mile races each week); and be part of a fun team with lots of camaraderie. No previous experience necessary and the team is filled with runners at every speed level.

Offered in the fall season.

Basketball Teams

Our teams play games on weekday afternoons in the Crosstown Middle School League. Seventh and 8th Grade teams are divided by ability and commitment levels. Home games take place in our 401 gymnasium. Basketball shoes, shorts, and water bottle are needed. **Offered in the winter season.**

Track and Field

Students learn and practice the wide range of track and field events: sprinting, distance, jumping, throwing, relays, and more. The team participates in four to five meets, which are scheduled on both afternoons and Saturdays. **Offered in the spring season.**

Ultimate Frisbee

Discover why this game has become a Northwest School obsession and, at the same time, join a tradition of school excellence in the quality of play and spirit of the game. No previous disc or ultimate experience is required—just a lot of energy and enthusiasm. Tons of running is involved, so be ready. Class times are used for skills practice and scrimmages. Games are played against other teams on weekdays. **Offered in the spring season.**

Volleyball Teams

Learn the skills of this fun, exciting sport! Teams practice in our 401 gymnasium and play games on weekdays. At this time, the Cross Town Middle School League (CTMSL) is a girls' volleyball league. **Offered at D1 level I in the fall and D2 and 6th Grade level in the spring.**

Additional Middle School PE Course Offerings

Each year, we offer an interesting array of classes that are not team-sports-based. The specific classes we offer in any given year are determined by a combination of student interest, teacher interest and experience, and facility availability. Final details for 2022-2023 will be determined in the future, but will likely be similar to the following options:

Lifetime Sports and Movement

A combined 7th/8th Grade variety class that engages students in a number of athletic activities and promotes accessible fitness to students with a wide range of abilities and experience. These activities may include racquet sports (such as pickle ball and/or tennis), boxing, and bowling. **Offered in the fall and winter.**

Yoga and Fitness

A combined 7th/8th Grade variety class that introduces students to the physical and mental benefits of yoga, as well as offering a variety of fitness activities in our Fitness Mezzanine. **Offered in the winter.**

Indoor Bouldering/Rock Climbing

Students have an opportunity to challenge themselves within the safe confines of the Seattle Bouldering Project. This class focuses on climbing efficiency and technique. Students work on strength, flexibility, balance, and other aspects of physical fitness that are essential for climbing. There may be an option to participate in a climbing competition. No previous experience required. **Offered in the winter.**

Urban Hiking

In this class, we explore anywhere we can get to by foot. Some days, that means places in nature, other days urban places and playgrounds. We meet people and pets, go upstairs and across bridges, see art and architecture, and sometimes eat tasty food. All that is required is an open mind, a generous spirit with classmates, and a readiness to put one foot in front of the other in pursuit of adventure. **Offered in the winter season (and possibly other times of year if enough interest).**



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