



The
Northwest
School



Middle School Curriculum Guide

2021-2022



Middle School Overview

The Middle School is a special community within the larger community of The Northwest School. It embraces the unique and dramatic transition from childhood to young adulthood by providing a safe and supportive environment and a challenging program. Teachers encourage students to take risks in order to develop a sure sense of who they are and what they can accomplish. The academic program is rich, well structured, and interdisciplinary when appropriate. Students are always involved in two stimulating arts classes and have regular physical activity periods. The advisory program ensures that there is strong, open communication between students and teachers, as well as between teachers and parents. Periodically, Middle School students take trips into the larger community to gain balance with classroom experiences and exposure to real community needs. Twice a year, in the fall and spring, students go on three-day expeditions to various places in the Northwest. After three years in the Middle School, our students are ready to take on the more demanding personal and academic challenges found in the Upper School.



Humanities

- 6 Humanities – *Jenna Gareis, Erik Hood*
- 7 Humanities, including Washington State History – *Tamara Bunnell, Jenna Gareis*
- 8 Humanities – *Gustavo Garces, Malia Taggart*

Math

- 6 Math – *Jennifer Ford*
- 7 Math – *Richard Ha*
- 8 Algebra – *Jennifer Ford, Maddy Huggins, Shivani Vakharia*

Science

- 6 General Science – *Erica Bergamini*
- 7 Life Science – *Nathan Franck*
- 8 Earth Science – *Herb Bergamini*

Languages

- 6 Foundations – *Clarke Reid, Abbie Wang*
- 7 Spanish – *Monica Van Loon*
- 8 Spanish – *Maiensy Sanchez, Monica Van Loon*

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.

Physical Education

One class each trimester, with a required variety of physical education and health and wellness activities during the year.

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.

A weekly study hall staffed by 6th Grade advisors helps 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. Additional help is available to students during teachers’ office hours (from 2:45–3:30 pm, on Wednesdays). 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 – Jenna Gareis and Erik Hood

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. For a basic breakdown of the skills of our curriculum, please read below:

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|----------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------|
| • Argumentation | • Data Gathering | • Summarization | • Visual Rhetoric |
| • Technical Writing | • Citation | • Civics | • Bias |
| • Rhetoric | • Writing Practice | • Vocabulary Acquisition | • Analysis |
| • Workflow | • Narrative Writing | • Systemic Thinking | • Critical Thinking |
| • Technology | • Primary/Secondary Sources | • Fallacies | |
| • Research Questions | | | |

Mathematics

Math 6 – Jennifer Ford

6th Grade Math at The Northwest School is the beginning of an accelerated Middle School Math pathway, designed to provide a solid foundation for all learners. Throughout the course students learn to represent mathematical relationships in multiple ways, justify and defend their reasoning, and think creatively and flexibly as they solve many types of problems.

Units of Study during 6th Grade include:

Area and Surface Area; Ratios, Rates and Unit Rates; Problem Solving with Rational Numbers; Equations and Expressions; Proportional Relationships; Problem Solving with Integers

Science

General Science – *Erica Bergamini*

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, hands-on activities, independent and group projects, and creative problem solving. Students learn research and reporting skills, as well as laboratory inquiry and safety skills, and are challenged to design experiments and/or equipment in order to answer their questions about how things work.

Sample Units:

Physical Science Topics: Designing; Conducting, and Reporting on a Scientific Experiment; Engineering Topics; Computer Coding Topics; Science & Math History/ Biographies; Energy Forms and Sources; Electricity, Circuits

Chemistry Topics: Periodic Table; Reactions; Investigations, and Laboratory Skills

Modern Languages

Foundations – *Clarke Reid, Abbie Wang*

Foundations is a year-long course that prepares 6th Grade students for the academic and technological demands of Middle School and introduce them to two modern languages. Students 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 also develop 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. For part of the year, students will also receive six weeks of instruction in both Spanish and Mandarin Chinese, so that they can choose their language pathway for 7th Grade.

Arts

As core classes, the arts form a central element of our 6th Grade experience. Students dive into the arts with a shared course of 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 growth and development. We leverage students' natural curiosity, developmental process of identity formation, need to connect, and 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. Even more than in 6th Grade, 7th graders are centered in their learning with advisors leading regular reflection, goal setting, and problem solving.

We celebrate the 7th Grade's place as the "middle of the middle," treating it as an opportunity to look at where they have been and where they are going.

Humanities

Humanities 7 and Washington State History – *Tamara Bunnell, Erik Hood*

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 cultures, explorations, and migrations to and within the Northwest. We examine what happens when different groups inhabit the same space, and we develop a better understanding of these relationships 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 – *Richard Ha*

7th Grade Math completes the second year of our accelerated Middle School Math pathway, designed to provide a solid foundation for all learners. The program builds on the work begun in Math 6 to prepare students for Algebra 1 in 8th Grade:

Units of study include: Basic Algebra; Rational Numbers; Scale Drawings, Similarity, and Slope; Writing and Solving Equations; Inequalities, Expressions, and Equations; Linear Relationships; Functions; Exponents and Scientific Notation.

Science

Life Science 7 – *Nathan Franck*

This course explores biological sciences. Topics include microbiology, genetics, evolution, and the major systems of the human body, as well as related systems in plants and other organisms when applicable. Environmental and health-related topics are included as appropriate. Students are guided by the scientific method as they practice safe laboratory techniques and hone their research and reporting skills. In addition, students work on several group and individual inquiry projects throughout the year.

Modern Languages

Spanish 1 – *Monica Van Loon*

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.

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.

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 – *Gustavo Garces, Malia Taggart*

Humanities 8 is an integrated study of World Geography and Literature. The course uses complementary material from each subject area to increase a student's situational awareness locally and globally, develop a deeper understanding of the cultures that move this world, and create a more comprehensive perspective of the self and the student's relationship to this world. We start the year with a short unit on Identity to introduce the reciprocal nature existing between the self and the community at large and how we are shaped by this relationship. We then move to the unit of Africa as a continent with its myriad societies and ethnicities and its increasingly complex narratives of precolonial, colonial, and post-colonial histories. We introduce and develop themes, issues, skills, and approaches that are used throughout the year.

In our regional studies units, Africa, Central America & the Caribbean, and South Asia, we study the geography, culture, history, both past and present, and the current events that shape and impact each region. In each unit we include representative literature from various authors to provide a multi-perspectival approach to the history and culture of each region. We pivot briefly in the spring to read comparative Western canonical texts and their relationship to the themes discussed and presented throughout the year. Finally, during the final trimester, our focus will shift to media literacy. Here we explore the influence of technology and mass media on American culture and society. Throughout the year, a range of assignments enhances student skills in writing, critical reading, research, discussion, and presentation, plus note taking, organization, and other study skills.

As we move through each region of the world, we analyze the following:

- How cultural identities influence/differ from national identities.
- How geography, borders, and cultural differences, inform/diverge from national identity.
- Why the discovery and further pursuit of resources often aggressively impact power and national identity within a society/geographic region.

Mathematics

Math 8/Algebra I – Jennifer Ford, Maddy Huggins, Shivani Vakharia

Math 8

In Math 8 students begin their study of algebraic functions, with an emphasis on understanding and analyzing proportional and non-proportional linear relationships. Students use linear relationships to model real-life situations, including those that lead to systems of linear equations. Students use multiple representations to reason about linear functions and learn to solve systems of linear equations by inspection, graphing, and using algebraic strategies. All students practice communicating their mathematical reasoning both verbally and in writing. Students cultivate a large set of problem-solving strategies throughout the year.

Algebra I

In Algebra students use a variety of linear and non-linear equations and inequalities to model real-life situations. Students use multiple representations to reason about linear and non-linear functions and learn to solve systems of linear and non-linear equations and inequalities by inspection, graphing, and using algebraic strategies. All students practice communicating their mathematical reasoning verbally, graphically, and in writing. They use these skills to problem solve, deepen understanding, and support their mathematical argument.

Science

Science 8 – Herb Bergamini

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 – Maiensy Sanchez, Monica Van Loon

Spanish 2 is taught exclusively in Spanish, and focuses on consolidating the skills learned in Spanish 1 while adding new vocabulary and grammatical structures. The student 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. Topics covered at this level include daily routine, food, celebrations and traditions, technology, and a visit to the doctor. By the end of the year, students understand the grammar and structures required to express themselves in the present, past, and imperfect tenses.

Arts

As core classes, the arts form a central element of our 8th Grade experience. With two arts at all times, students have the opportunity to dive deep into what they are most passionate about while 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.

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. Librarians collaborate regularly with the Middle School Humanities faculty to develop independently chosen reading projects. The Librarians sponsor all-school Drop Everything and Read events and a Middle School Book Club for students.

The Librarians collaborate 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

With the pivot to remote learning, the library has increased its collection of digital and audiobook materials. The focus of our integration of technology is to help students use computers with ease and confidence and recognize when specific technology can enhance their learning. Thus, students acquire computer skills in the context of our content-based curriculum. The Educational Technology Coordinators, Librarians, and Middle School teachers coordinate 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 sharing their 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.
- Understand and follow intellectual property rights, procedures for validating information, and computer ethics and etiquette.
- Discuss the core concepts of digital citizenship: professionalism, privacy, permission, and personal information.

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 of their choosing during the 7th or 8th Grade years.

Dance

Jump into Dance (6th Grade) – *Ellie Sandstrom*

This course is a creative and cultural approach to the world of dance through a variety of styles. Improvisational games and choreography exercises help students to embody dance concepts such as space, time, energy, and force. Students learn steps that are basic to many kinds of dance and to put them together in a variety of dances from around the world. This is an introductory class for all 6th graders. 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. *No dance experience required.*

Authentic Jazz – *Maya Soto*

Jazz dance includes influences from African and Latin styles as well as Swing and even Ballet. Students learn the history of Jazz dance, including its roots in African American Social Dance, Lindy Hop, and Theater Dance. They explore upbeat and energetic dances such as the Shim Sham and the Charleston, and try out classic moves like Apple Jacks, Mess Around, and Tacky Annie. In addition to learning choreography, students create their own. Dancers work as an ensemble and perform for the community. *Offered in the 6/7/8 art block during Trimester 1.*

Community Modern Dance – *Elvin Jones*

In this class, students learn to dance from the inside out. Collectively, we define what “community” means to us, as a group of learners and as a group of developing human beings who are dancing together. Through a class primarily based in the Lester Horton Modern Dance technique, we learn how to dance with precision, line, form, and grace. We also employ and embody a West African dance structure of the circle! In this dance class we begin and end class in a circle to identify and exemplify the idea of collective support and responsibility toward each other, our leaders, and our ancestors. Using the book, *The Intimate Act of Choreography* (Blom 1982), we learn basic choreographic tools. Finally, we engage in theatre improvisation exercises adapted from the canon of Theatre of the Oppressed (Boal 2002). *Offered in the 7/8 Art Block in T1.*

Dances for Musical Theater – *Maya Soto*

The dance scenes in a play or movie advance the plot, bring a time-period to life, or reveal a character. In this class, students learn dances from different musicals that serve each of these purposes. They also create choreography of their own and perform for the community. Excellent training for actors. *Offered in the 6/7/8 art block during Trimester 2.*

Commercial Dance – *Maya Soto*

Commercial dance is associated with show business and pop culture and is about entertaining the audience and telling stories. This includes dances for TV shows, commercials, music videos, movies, and popular dance trends. This style requires versatility. Students learn dances with movements from Jazz, Modern, Hip Hop, and Funk styles. In addition to leaps, jumps, and turns, they dive in and explore quick sharp isolations and syncopated rhythms and create long lines and crisp shapes with the body. Dancers work as an ensemble and perform for the community. *Offered in the 6/7/8 Art Block in T3.*

Middle School Advanced Dance Ensemble – *Ellie Sandstrom*

This is an intensive, year-long course, designed to strengthen each participant's dance and movement technique, as well as their choreographic skills and artistry, while building a strong ensemble that performs throughout the year. This class explores contemporary movement forms, including Modern Dance, Hip Hop styles and more, in a non-competitive environment. Strong commitment and dedication to the creative process, as well as cooperative collaboration skills are essential for this class. Students wishing to be a part of this ensemble are asked to send an email inquiry to the instructor, ellie.sandstrom@northwestschool.org. **Dance experience and audition required.** Offered in the 7/8 grade art block in T1, T2, and T3.

Music

Bands

Intro to Band (6th Grade) – *Erin Keeton Howard*

This course is open to all 6th Grade students with or without experience. In this class, students 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 learn note and rhythm reading and gain listening skills vital to playing in an ensemble as well as the critical skills of personal musicianship. We also explore composition, chamber ensembles, and music around the world. *This is a year-long class, offered in the 6th Grade Block in T1, T2, and transitioning to MS Band in the 6/7/8 Block T3.*

Middle School Band – *Erin Keeton Howard*

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 learn note and rhythm reading and gain listening skills vital to playing in an ensemble. **Prerequisite: Completion of Intro To Band or permission of instructor by audition.** *This is a year-long class, offered in the 6/7/8 Block in T1, T2, and T3.*

Advanced Band – *Erin Keeton Howard*

Students in this course continue the study of a band instrument 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 performs each trimester in required concerts. Placement in this course is at the discretion of the director based on effort, ability, and performance during Trimester 1. *This is a one-trimester course, offered in the 7/8 art block in Trimester 3.*

Choirs

Middle School Choir – *Christian Stallworth*

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 sings songs from a wide variety of styles, eras, and cultures and performs one to two times per trimester. This class is experiential, and open to all students who are interested in learning more about choral singing. Singers of all ability levels are welcome and encouraged to join choir in Trimester 1! *Offered in the 6/7/8 Arts Block in T1.*

Advanced Choir – *Christian Stallworth*

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 sings songs from a wide variety of styles, eras, and cultures, focusing on singing in unison, two-part, and three-part music. As a two-trimester class, this choir performs two to six times. Advanced Choir focuses on more in-depth choral music learning, including music theory and sight-singing. **This requires previous choral experience, completion of MC CHOIR Trimester 1, or permission of Choral Director.** Offered as a two-trimester in the 6/7/8 arts block during Trimesters 2 and 3.

*Orchestras***Introduction to String Instruments (6th Grade)** – *Ethan Sobotta*

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 in T1, T2, and T3.*

Middle School Orchestra – *Ethan Sobotta*

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 includes classical, chamber, and popular music. This course includes a unit on conducting, and each student gets a chance to direct the ensemble. Prior members and graduates of the Intro to Strings class do not need to re-audition. New members are asked to audition by playing two minutes from any piece of their choosing, any major scale, and easy music reading provided at the audition. The student's prepared piece may be any solo or a part from previously learned orchestral music. Information about audition appointments is available at registration. *This is a year-long course, offered in the 6/7/8 Art Block in T1, T2, and T3.*

Advanced Orchestra – *Jo Nardolillo*

In this class, intermediate and advanced string musicians play repertoire spanning all genres, from baroque and classical to pop tunes and movie scores. Concert orchestra is open to violin, viola, cello, and double players who have achieved proficiency on their instrument and can read music. Pianists, harpists, woodwind and brass players, and classical guitar players are also welcome to inquire about enrolling in this class. Practice outside of class time is essential and private lessons are highly recommended. Performances include community outreach and evening events such as Winter Concert, ArtsFest, and Spring Concert. New members are asked to play two minutes from any piece of their choosing, any major scale, and easy music reading provided at the audition. The student's prepared piece may be any solo or excerpts from previously learned orchestra music. Information about audition appointments is available at registration. **Audition required.** *This is a year-long course, offered in the 7/8 Art Block in T1, T2, and T3.*

*Popular Music***Popular Music** – *Ethan Sobotta*

This class explores the use of music in media and the effect it has on mood, emotions, and storytelling. Students research and present on a variety of popular music topics, learn basic instrumental and rhythm skills, and use Soundtrap 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 in T3.*

Theatre Arts

6th Grade Drama – *Solomon Davis*

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 ideas about 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.*

Intro to Theatre – *Ashleigh Bragg*

This class is designed for acting students curious about improving their skills and knowledge base in theatre and acting. The class works toward sharing performances that are based in Applied Theatre pedagogy, with a strong concentration around critical thinking and dialogue, and social justice issues that matter most to each student. This is a class for students who are interested in co-creating and investing in the future of theatre. Students may select short scripts and scenes from published playwrights or create their own original works. The class emphasizes advanced vocal and physical body work based in Movement, Tadashi Suzuki Method & Viewpoints Composition training. Students also gain exposure to Applied Theatre forms (theatre for social justice.) All theatre classes and theatrical curriculum at The Northwest School will be working toward eradicating anti-blackness and anti-IPOC (Indigenous people of color) practices and will uplift anti-oppressive theatre-making spaces for all. *Offered in the 6/7/8 art block in T1, T2, and T3.*

Intro to Stage Technology – *Zach Humes*

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 in T1.*

Stage Design & Technology – *Zach Humes*

Creating great theater is only the start: 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 Play 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 in T2 and T3.

Theatre Production – *Ashleigh Bragg*

This course is designed to strengthen each student’s theatrical and acting technique while building an ensemble and a sense of community. Actors audition, rehearse, and perform one full production during the school year for The Northwest School community and general public. This class works closely with the New Middle School Stage Design and Technology class to create full and innovative productions which include (but are not limited to): acting on camera, film production, stage management, costume, lighting, sound and set design, and promotional photography and videography for all productions. All theatre classes and theatrical curriculum at The Northwest School will be working toward eradicating anti-blackness and anti-IPOC (Indigenous people of color) practices and will uplift anti-oppressive theatre-making spaces for all. **Audition required: information about audition appointments is available at registration.** *This is a year-long course, offered in the 7/8 Art Block in T1, T2, and T3.*

Visual Arts

Introduction to Visual Art (6th Grade) – *Julia Freeman*

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 (Shape, 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.

Ceramics – *Randy Silver*

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!

Digital Art Exploration – *Nathalie Hall*

This course explores the basic principles of design through a series of computer-based studio projects and critiques. Students develop introductory skills, knowledge, and techniques to effectively utilize Adobe Creative Suite, including Photoshop and other applications. Students understand and apply the elements and principles of art and design as they express their creativity in a digital format. Topics covered may include pixel art, animated GIFS, typography, layout, image editing, filters, the pen tool, and more. Students in this course learn basic and complex techniques for creating digital works of art as well as the methods and uses for graphic design in a real-world context.

Map as Art – *Sandy Nelson*

This class explores maps to inspire our artwork. Projects include map-related artwork about both actual and imagined places as well as maps of processes or ideas. For example, how would you make a map painting of a great baseball swing or a delicious dessert? We create sculptures, drawings, prints, and paintings that incorporate map-making. We also experiment with embroidering a map. Students learn and practice art techniques for design, drawing, acrylic paint, watercolor paint, printmaking, and embroidery. We look at contemporary and historic maps as well as work by contemporary artists who incorporate maps into their art such as Maya Lin and Shantell Martin.

People in Art – *Sandy Nelson*

This class explores art that focuses on people as a theme. Students in the class will work on projects such as a wire and plaster sculpture of an athlete, lessons in drawing and painting faces, and a mixed media collage of a human figure. We study techniques for drawing the human form with pencil, charcoal, and paint. We also study and practice techniques for using watercolor paint, acrylic paint, paper mache, and charcoal. For inspiration, we look at examples of images of people in art from different times and cultures.

Landscape Art – *Sandy Nelson*

Landscapes are artworks that portray a view of the natural land. Students in this class work on projects such as a landscape painting of a view they choose, a clay and plaster landscape postcard, a tunnel book of a landscape, and a paper pulp landscape. Students learn and practice techniques for using acrylic and watercolor paints, collage, oil pastels, drawing, and cardboard sculpture. For inspiration, we look at images of landscape artwork by contemporary and historical landscape artists from a variety of cultures.

Color and Collage – *Sandy Nelson*

This class uses collage to creatively explore shape, color, and design. Projects include two-dimensional mixed media pieces, animal collages, sports collages, collages with text and writing, collages using found papers from the recycling bin, and sculptural three-dimensional artworks incorporating collage. We study color relationships and paint color mixing and learn strategies for incorporating color into collage artworks. In addition, we look at examples of contemporary and historical collage artists from a variety of cultures for inspiration. Our projects make use of magazines, newspapers, found objects, fabric, yarn, cardboard, wire, watercolor paint, and oil pastels.

Art & Architecture – *Sandy Nelson*

This class studies the way visual art intersects with architecture. Projects we work on include a radial design print, a clay gargoyle sculpture, a three-dimensional saddle-roof-structure-building model, a two-point perspective architectural drawing, and a building sculpture design based on a real object. We look at pictures of interesting contemporary and historical world architecture and examples of visual art inspired by architecture. We learn and practice techniques for working with drawing pencils, charcoal, paints, wood, wire, and paper mache.

Environmental Art – *Sandy Nelson*

This class explores how the natural environment and concern for its well-being can serve as inspiration for making art. We look at examples of paintings, sculptures, earthworks, and art installations from a variety of cultures and periods as we explore connections between art making and nature. Projects include creating a “personal environmental concern” drawing and painting, an “environmental superhero” sculpture, a miniature sculpture for our school environment, a folded artist book made from recycled materials, and a mud painting. We learn and practice techniques for working with paints, recycled materials, paper mache, wire, and oil pastels.

Drawing with Themes – *Nathalie Hall*

This course explores drawing and themes through studio projects that are supplemented by hands-on demonstrations of materials and techniques, critiques, art history, and sketchbook use. Students are encouraged to explore the subject matter of their choosing as they experiment with a variety of drawing materials, including pencil, pen, marker, charcoal, watercolor pencils, ink, oil pastel, and more. The elements and principles of art and design provide a foundation of knowledge. Subject matter varies and students draw from life as well as from imagination. Via a structured and open approach, students discover ways of making representational and non-representational drawings that express their personal experience of the world. They grow their drawing styles and craftsmanship while exploring a different theme each week.

Printmaking: 101 – *Nathalie Hall*

This course explores printmaking and covers many aspects of the art of making prints, including tools, inks, paper, plate preparation, registration, and printing processes. The goal is for students to gain the skills and confidence to produce multiple images by hand-printing while exploring personal visual expression. Printmaking techniques engage students in problem solving through drawing, design, and color. Classes encompass independent and collaborative printing along with demonstrations, discussion, and critique. Projects cover collagraph, monotypes, relief (linoleum, Styrofoam), and others.

Continued Stories: Bookmaking and Bookbinding – *Nathalie Hall*

This course is perfect for students who are beginners in bookbinding or bookmaking. Students create handmade books using different bookbinding techniques such as X-fold, accordion fold, and pamphlet stitch. Students learn the uses of a needle, thread, awl, bone folder, and other tools to create these one-of-a-kind books. We use a variety of different papers and materials as we experiment with digital photography and other image-making processes. Students draw from their own stories, famous authors' stories, poetry, or essays to create their book content. Other topics covered include the history of book-making, comic books, manga, and picture books. The elements of principles of art and design ground our work. The class culminates in an original comic book creation. Students also keep a re-purposed sketchbook made from a recycled hardcover book. Offered in the 7/8 art block in Trimester 2.

Abstract Art – *Nathalie Hall*

Free yourself from realism! Abstract art is considered one of the purest forms of expression since it allows its creator to freely communicate visually without the constraint of forms found in objective reality. In this class, students explore a variety of art materials such as acrylic paint, watercolor, ink, collage, marker, sculpture, and pastels. They engage in non-objective mark-making, free-form expression, and communicating meaning through color and design. The primary objectives of the class include fostering exploration, creativity, unique expression, as well as avoiding judgments. Students also learn about relevant artists and art movements such as Cubism, Fauvism, Dada, Surrealism, Fauvism, Abstract Expressionism, and Op-Art.

Comic Book Art – *Nathalie Hall*

Boom! Pow! Snap! In this class, students learn how to write and illustrate comics and comic books. This course explores how to craft a comic story and how to create great characters. Part of the course includes reading and analyzing comic books, characters, and stories. We explore facial expressions, speech bubbles, character design, motion, sound effects, panel layout, and writing stories. Students create characters as they learn how to tell a story that takes readers on a journey through sequential panels of artwork. We also dive into graphic novels, manga, and comic strips. By the end of the trimester, students will have better developed their creativity, imagination, communication skills, and manual dexterity.

Drawing from Observation – *Nathalie Hall*

This course is designed for beginner, intermediate, and advanced students who want to learn the basics of drawing from observation and to sharpen their drawing skills. By slowing down and looking closely, students improve hand-eye coordination as they draw from life. They develop representational drawing skills using a variety of media. As the course progresses, students draw from still life, photographic references, and live models. Through a series of demonstrations, in-class drawings, group critiques, and individual assistance from the instructor, students develop their ability to draw convincingly from life. Focus topics include composition, proportion, value relationships, edge relationships, modeling, materials, and stylization. Note: Students will receive a sketchbook.

Physical Education Curriculum

The P.E. program in Middle School offers a wide variety of individual and team sports and activities. Some activities are offered multiple trimesters but most are seasonal, lasting only part of the year. Interscholastic sports practice during the school day while games are played outside the school day, usually right after school. Teams may play on any day of the week. All classes emphasize participation. In addition to skill 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.

Student Requirements

- Students take physical education all three trimesters during 6th, 7th, and 8th Grades.
- To facilitate our goal of engaging all new students in a fun, 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.

6th Grade Fundamentals

Over the course of the 6th Grade year, all students are introduced to the core fundamentals of our physical health and wellness program. As part of their participation in team sports or the variety classes, students learn about the basics of aerobic and strength training, nutrition and hydration, injury prevention, flexibility/mobility, and balance. They also practice the skills of “sportsmanship” and teamwork. In a separate six-week class (taken by all students during the winter) students learn mindfulness practices, stress management and emotional regulation tools, and begin to build stronger interpersonal relationship and consent skills.

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 and/or games during their scheduled physical education class times. Depending on the sport, games generally take place after school.

Soccer Teams

One does not have to be a seasoned and skilled soccer player to join a team here. Beginners and club players are both welcome and encouraged. Soccer shoes, shin guards, and shorts are needed. Home games take place during the week and 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 Teams

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. Students compete in both single-gender and mixed-gender teams. *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 P.E. 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 2020-2021 are in process, but the following courses are likely offerings:

Lifetime Sports and Movement

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

Urban Hiking

In this class we explore anywhere we can get to by foot. Some days that means places of 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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