



FRANCIS
PARKER
SCHOOL

Middle School Course Catalog

Parker's Mission is to inspire a diverse community of independent thinkers whose academic excellence, global perspective and strength of character prepare them to make a meaningful difference in the world.

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Academics

Academic excellence is at the core of the Parker experience. Since 1912, our educators have been encouraging students to stretch academically, to solve authentic problems using in-depth analysis, to work effectively in partnership with others and to become knowledgeable, empathetic, global citizens.

The Middle School provides a structured, caring community where small class sizes allow teachers to provide students personal attention, cultivate their individual strengths and lift them to exceed expectations. The core curriculum is enriched by a robust advisory program, daily music, physical education, and classes in visual, performing and technical arts. Students marry the principles of scientific inquiry and design thinking to discover the process of innovation in the new Design Lab.

Mathematics

Math 6

Math 6 is designed to integrate a prior foundation of number sense and basic operations with more complex problem solving. The main concepts of sixth grade math include an introduction to statistics and probability; understanding of operations with integers; order of operations including exponents and integers; factoring large numbers; integration and application of fractions, decimals, and percents; understanding ratios and proportions including simple conversions using dimensional analysis; and basic equations and functions. Students develop note-taking skills through completion of guided notes. Under the umbrella of the sixth grade theme of self-awareness, students learn to reflect on, self-assess, and revise homework. Students also take ownership of their learning and develop study skills through the completion of homework packets that expect them to make connections between their daily performance and assessment review work.

Pre-Algebra

Pre-Algebra is a rigorous course incorporating all strands of mathematics. The course serves as a critical link in the transition from arithmetic to algebra. Advanced arithmetic concepts are reviewed and used extensively, and the primary foundations to all algebraic concepts are introduced and practiced. Topics covered include expressions, equations, variables, patterns, problem solving strategies, functions and graphing, geometry, and introductory polynomials. There is a strong emphasis on the application of concepts through daily practice, direct instruction, classroom discussions, and exploration activities. Students are expected to use the language of mathematics in reading, writing, and discussing to further develop understandings. In addition, students are encouraged to reach beyond memorized rules or strategies in order to fully comprehend the reasoning behind the algorithms.

Algebra 1A

Algebra 1A is designed to meet the needs of a student who is ready for Algebra but at a pace that provides greater time for the development of new skills and reinforcement of past learning targets. Students in Algebra 1A will complete the Algebra 1 curriculum by participating in a two year program with a placement into Algebra 1B the following year. The Learning Targets support the algorithmic, conceptual, and graphical understandings of both numbers and variables in algebraic expressions and equations. Specific topics in Algebra 1A include a review of algebraic fundamentals like expressions, rational numbers, percents, and equations, followed by linear equations and their graphs, inequalities and their graphs, systems of equations and

inequalities and their graphs, absolute value equations and inequalities, exponent properties, radical properties, and operations with polynomials. Upon matriculation to the following year, students in Algebra 1B will then begin where Algebra 1A finished and address graphs of polynomials, factoring, quadratic equations and their graphs, exponential equations, radical expressions and equations, and rational expressions and equations. Problem solving techniques and strategies designed to improve critical thinking and organizational skills are developed and reinforced throughout the year. Placement into Algebra 1A is determined by diagnostic testing, previous coursework, and teacher recommendation from seventh grade Pre-Algebra.

Algebra I

Algebra 1 is designed to give all students a solid algebraic foundation before moving on to higher-level mathematics courses. The course focuses on formalizing the language of functions and exploring the behavior of functions numerically, graphically, analytically, and verbally. Students in Algebra 1 write expressions, equations, and inequalities from physical models and gain a stronger understanding of the properties of real numbers. Problem solving and real-world application opportunities throughout the year give students a deeper understanding of algebra concepts and sharpen their critical thinking skills. Cross-curricular units and projects further enrich the Algebra 1 course. Placement into Algebra 1 is determined by diagnostic testing, previous coursework, and teacher recommendation.

Algebra I Honors

Algebra 1 Honors is designed to be a rigorous and challenging course that requires students to draw upon all prior mathematical understandings. The scope and sequence challenges students to think critically, using full comprehension and retention, and apply arithmetic and algebraic concepts to many various scenarios. The pace of the course is quick and students will be required to use all math vocabulary to ensure that the discussions in class demonstrate a depth of knowledge deserving of an Honors level course. Algebra I Honors covers topics such as equations, inequalities, polynomials, factoring, rational expressions, functions, graphs, systems, radical expressions, and quadratic equations. Problem-solving techniques and critical thinking skills are expanded and explored throughout the year. A Stock Market project further enriches the Algebra 1 Honors course as students reinforce understandings of linear growth and data analysis while also learning about how to use formulas within spreadsheets.

Geometry Honors

Geometry Honors emphasizes the study of the properties and applications of common geometric figures in two and three dimensions. It is a critical component of a mathematics education because students are required to relate concepts from Algebra to geometric phenomena. Deductive reasoning skills are developed by using theorems to solve problems and create formal proofs. Topics covered in plane geometry include angles, lines, triangles, polygons, circles, congruency, similar figures, area, volume, trigonometric ratios, logic and constructions. The course is supplemented with mini projects and activities designed to re-emphasize a particular approach to problem solving or to introduce another approach to examining geometric or mathematical thinking. Two-column proofs are emphasized and students are expected to attempt the most challenging work available, independently and critically.

English

English 6

The overarching goal of this course is to help students develop as mindful, knowledgeable, and enthusiastic readers, writers and critical thinkers. Moving beyond plot and summary, 6th grade students begin recognizing and analyzing subtle literary elements and broader themes in the texts they encounter. At its core, the daily curriculum is designed to help students form and keep habits that will empower them as learners in and out of the classroom: active reading, regular application of the writing process, basic study skills, time management, responsible behavior, and respectful communication in the classroom. The content of the curriculum is an age-appropriate mix of genres, forms, and subject matter, all of which connect with the broader sixth-grade theme of Self Awareness. The increasing complexity of the literature stretches students as readers, thinkers, and writers, leaving them primed and ready for the challenges that await them in English 7.

English 7

This course pushes students to take the next steps toward academic writing and scholarship. If students begin to think critically and independently in English 6, they are asked to build appropriate foundations underneath that thinking in English 7. The daily curriculum focuses on close reading, passage analysis, vocabulary development, and supporting an argument. The diverse reading selections -- a wide variety of age-appropriate works from different cultures and different eras -- lead students, directly or indirectly, toward the 7th-grade theme of Community Awareness. The English 7 curriculum also emphasizes substantive collaboration, effective presentation skills, and independent reading.

English 8

Playing off the 8th grade theme of Global Awareness, the curriculum of this course emphasizes critical thinking and leads students to a richer understanding of human nature. Working in a cross-curricular mode with their history courses, students are guided through some of the most challenging and troubling topics of the modern era. The texts are denser, the themes more challenging. Ultimately, students come to wrestle with both the negative and positive aspects of the human condition. At the same time, the literature of the course pushes students toward reflecting on their own unique identities, especially in the context of their own family stories and ancestry. Working jointly in their history and English classes, all students complete a multi-media “Family History” project, which they present to their classmates and teachers in the second trimester. This course pushes students to take the next steps toward academic writing and scholarship.

Science

Science 6 - Earth Science

Students in sixth grade Earth Science pursue a course that emphasizes discovery of their home planet and how Earth's systems interact. Earth is explored as a set of interconnected systems: atmosphere, hydrosphere, geosphere, and biosphere. Students investigate the different sources of energy and matter that cycle within and among the systems, over various time scales. Students use models to deepen their understanding of the interconnectedness of these stems and how processes within these systems cause Earth to change over time. Additionally, students investigate Earth as part of a broader system - the solar system - which itself is a small part of one of the many galaxies in the universe. Active, hands-on class activities and investigations heighten the awareness of scientific habits of mind, critical thinking skills, and problem-solving strategies. Students are expected to use the language of science in reading, writing, and discussion to further develop their understanding of the sciences. The overall goal is to produce lifelong learners of science.

Science 7 - Life Science

This course develops students' scientific knowledge, understanding, skills, and engineering practices in order to inspire a love of life science. The purpose is to give all students an overview of common strands in life science including, but not limited to, diversity of living organisms, structure and function of cells, heredity and genetics, body systems, ecosystems, and biological evolution. Students explore an amazing variety of organisms, the complex workings of the cell, the relationship between living things and their environments, and discoveries in the world of modern genetics. Practical, hands-on lesson activities help students discover how scientists investigate the living world. The final purpose of the course is to help students hone their scientific observational skills in preparation for eighth grade science.

Science 8 - Physical Science

In eighth grade physical science, students pursue a course that emphasizes discovery of matter and its interactions, motion, energy, waves and their applications in technologies for information transfer. By the end of this course, students will be able to answer the following questions: "How do atomic and molecular interactions explain the properties of matter that we see and feel?", "How can one describe physical interactions between objects and within systems of objects?", "How can energy be transferred from one object or system to another?", and "What are the characteristic properties of waves and how can they be used?" Students will look for patterns to understand how the physical world works. Class activities heighten the awareness of scientific habits of mind, critical thinking skills and problem-solving strategies. Students are expected to use the language of science in reading, writing and discussion to further develop their understanding of the sciences. In addition, students are encouraged to reach beyond the classroom and participate in science activities offered off-campus. The overall goal is to produce lifelong learners of science.

Social Studies

Geography, History, and Culture 6

The Geography, History and Culture 6 course provides a thematic overview of the development of complex civilizations throughout the world. Students will examine the dynamic relationship between geography and culture in Central America, Southwest Asia, South America and early Europe by examining the ways in which people groups have adapted to lands with diverse climates and topography. Students will master concrete information (landforms, location, vocabulary) in addition to acquiring the analytical skills necessary to become critical thinkers and global citizens throughout their lives.

Geography, History, and Culture 7

The seventh grade social studies course coordinates with the sixth grade curriculum to cover World Geography, History, and Cultures. Sixth grade begins with a study of the Americas, Southwest Asia, and Ancient and Medieval Europe. Seventh grade considers the relationship between geography, history and cultures of Africa, Asia, and Renaissance to Modern Europe. The study of geography, history, and culture provides context for the development of reading, note-taking, writing and research skills. The World Geography, History, and Cultures 7 course gives students the opportunity to play the role of historian and to construct knowledge by interacting with a variety of sources. The study of world geography, history, and cultures also provides students with mirrors that reflect on their own identity and windows into the importance of other identity groups.

Making Our Modern America 8

The eighth grade social studies course asks students to develop a deeper understanding of the complex social, political, economic, and cultural themes that have confronted the American past and shaped our modern America. The course incorporates a narrative based historical approach with the use of multiple perspectives throughout history by examining both primary and secondary sources in order to develop reading, research, writing, and public speaking skills. The course also places emphasis on “Global Awareness,” which is the eighth grade theme.

World Language

Introduction to Spanish

This is a novice level Spanish course which corresponds to ACTFL (American Council of the Teaching of Foreign Languages) standards. The main goal of the course is to build a preliminary foundation of the language through basic reading, writing, listening, and oral activities, as well as acquiring the essential vocabulary and grammatical tools upon which the students will build in subsequent Spanish courses. Lastly, students will start acquiring an understanding of the Hispanic culture, the customs and traditions of Spanish-speaking countries.

Spanish I

This is a novice level Spanish course which corresponds to ACTFL (American Council of the Teaching of Foreign Language). Students will use memorization and highly practiced conversations that will mimic real life situations. It is a highly intensive vocabulary learning course with some basic grammar structures.

Spanish 2

This is an intermediate mid level Spanish course which corresponds to ACTFL (American Council of the Teaching of Foreign Languages) standards. Students are able to function in a classroom where Spanish is the main language, with the goal for there to be a continual decrease in the use English as the year goes on. There is considerable emphasis on new grammatical forms and structures which allow students to communicate effectively beyond the present tense. In this course students will begin to read more complex texts. Lastly, students will continue to gain an understanding of cultures, customs and traditions of Spanish-speaking countries through a variety of authentic sources.

Spanish 3

This is an intermediate high level Spanish course which corresponds to ACTFL (American Council of the Teaching of Foreign Languages) standards. This course focuses on advanced grammar structures and vocabulary to further increase students' ability to communicate in the target language in authentic situations. Students will continue to develop both oral and written communication skills, as well as read more complex texts. A strong emphasis is placed on the use of the Spanish language during class meetings. Lastly, students will continue to gain an understanding of the Hispanic culture, customs, and traditions of Spanish-speaking countries through a variety of authentic sources.

Spanish Language and Culture

This course is an introduction to the cultural and ethnic diversity of our global community. Students will examine global cultures and their worldviews in an immersive language setting. They will explore their perceptions, practices and products of the culture studied acquiring an understanding of and sensitivity towards other cultural perspectives. Students will also compare and contrast the cultures studied with their own in order to challenge or deepen their understanding of their own worldviews and prepare them for a globalized world.

Introduction to Mandarin

This course is a beginning Mandarin Chinese language course designed for students with no Chinese language background. Following the guidelines of the National Foreign Language Standards, this course has as its goal to specify at the beginning the knowledge and the skills the students should have gained at the completion of the course. Throughout the course, students are provided with numerous opportunities to engage in learning tasks for interpretive, interpersonal, and presentational communication. They will also explore aspects of Chinese culture that are related to the language under study, compare languages and cultures, and make connections with other subjects and communities. Because this is a beginning course, basic language skills are emphasized so that students can lay down a solid foundation for learning Chinese pronunciation and characters.

Mandarin I

Mandarin Chinese I course continues to develop the fundamentals of listening, speaking, reading and writing the Chinese language, emphasizing the Pinyin Romanization system, and tones. Students will learn basic grammar, including sentence structures, measure words, radicals, past and future tense. This class will also introduce Chinese culture, such as Chinese food, ethnicities, traditional holidays, customs, history and geography through language and class activities.

Mandarin 2

Mandarin Chinese II course continues to develop the fundamentals of listening, speaking, reading and writing the Chinese language, emphasizing the development of fluid and novel usage of the language. Students will review basic grammar, including sentence structures, measure words, radicals, past and future tense. Students will also begin to write in clear paragraphs with properly used connecting words and engage in interpersonal communications on a variety of topics. This class will also introduce Chinese culture, such as Chinese food, ethnicities, traditional holidays, customs, history and geography through language and class activities.

Mandarin Language and Culture

Mandarin Language and Culture exists to create depth of knowledge about the Mandarin speaking world. Based in geographic regions and using authentic texts, this course seeks to produce more globally minded language learners. The themes and motifs of this course are intended to increase real-world application of the language and allows students to feel comfortable when both speaking and writing.

French I

This is a novice low through intermediate mid level French course which corresponds to ACTFL (American Council of the Teaching of Foreign Languages) standards. This course is designed to build a strong foundation in reading, writing, listening and speaking within the context of the emerging vocabulary and grammar knowledge. To this end, they will learn major verbs groups, basic greetings and theme-based vocabulary, so that students can handle most basic daily communicative necessities. Students will also be introduced to French and some Francophone geography, history, and culture. Through thematic units, grammar lessons, writing assignments, speaking and listening exercises, along with project-based learning, students will develop both cultural awareness and communicative skills.

French 2

This is an intermediate mid through advanced French course which corresponds to ACTFL (American Council of the Teaching of Foreign Languages) standards. French II reinforces the basics learned in French 1 and introduces proper uses of past tenses and the future as well as more complex grammatical structures. Oral and written expression is emphasized along with various cultural readings. Students will exercise all language skills through different activities that will include authentic sources such as films, fiction and non-fiction readings, and podcasts.

French Language and Culture

This course is an introduction to the cultural and ethnic diversity of our global community. Students will examine global cultures and their worldviews in an immersive language setting. They will explore their perceptions, practices and products of the culture studied acquiring an understanding of and sensitivity towards other cultural perspectives. Students will also compare and contrast the cultures studied with their own in order to challenge or deepen their understanding of their own worldviews and prepare them for a globalized world.

Gooding Academic Resource Center

Targeted Education and Mentoring Course (TEAM)

TEAM is educational mentoring, led by the Learning Specialist, designed for students who need targeted academic and executive functioning support. Student registration in the course is based on previous academic performance, academic records/standardized testing scores, teacher recommendation, and is dependent upon Grade Level team approval. The Learning Specialist will guide students in building academic and study skills, developing self-advocacy, evolving their self-efficacy, understanding the learning process, and developing tools for planning, organizing, and time management. **TEAM** pedagogy is based upon a strengths-based approach to targeted academic skill development, social-emotional learning (SEL), and brain-based education, while utilizing student-directed goals, and building a trusting mentoring relationship.

TEAM Objective:

Teaching

Executive functioning skills,

Academic skills,

Mindfulness-based social emotional learning (MBSEL)

Middle School Academic Placement Policies

There are only two leveled courses in the Middle School: Mathematics and World Language. In these courses, students are often placed by ability rather than age. However, there is a standard course of study that most students follow.

Mathematics

As students enter Parker as a new student in the Middle School they are automatically placed into the course of study appropriate for their grade. However, they have the option to take a placement test to determine if they are working beyond their grade level. They should make arrangements through the Mathematics department chair in order to take a placement exam.

In each successive year in the Middle School, mathematics placement is determined by multiple criteria which includes teacher recommendation, academic grades earned, and study skills readiness. The mathematics progression can be found on the [Mathematics Program Sequence document](#).

World Language

If students enter Parker as a new student in Middle School they are automatically placed in the beginning level of a language (Intro for Spanish or Mandarin, or French 1). If they have had regular language instruction, and a good base in grammar and vocabulary, they have the option to choose Spanish 1 or Mandarin 1 in place of the introductory level. In addition, students have the option to take a placement test to determine if they are working beyond level 1 in any language. They should make arrangements through the World Language department chair in order to take a placement exam.

In each successive year at Parker, language placement is made by the teacher based on achievement and study skills, as well as confirmation by the AAPPL exam.

Music, Arts and Innovation Courses

Students in the Middle School take both music and art, innovation and design classes as part of their course work. Students will take one year-long music course, and two or three other art, innovation, or design courses. Students are expected to remain in the same music through their entire Middle School experience in order to develop fluency. Sixth graders will take a Grade 6 Foundations class as one of their trimester courses during the year. All art, innovation and design offerings are trimester classes, though some classes can be taken more than one trimester if there is room. The only exception to this is the eighth grade yearbook class. The goal of these diverse offerings is to expose students to a broad range of courses.

Music

Strings

Strings is a performance-based course open to students who play violin, viola, cello, and double bass. All students will refine musical and technical skills, explore a variety of musical genres, and deepen understanding of music within culture through the study and performance of selected repertoire. Strings students will perform in four on-campus concerts throughout the academic year and perform at Forum Music Festival for an adjudication rating. Students will be graded on daily performance practice, major concerts, and written reflections.

Band

Band is a full year course for woodwind, brass and percussion students. The band performs five concerts each year including the Holiday Concert and a music festival in Orange County. Students will develop technique through long tone exercises, scales and chords. The band rehearses and performs concert pieces, music from films, jazz and rock. The 6th grade band plays music at grades 1-1.5, 7th grade band plays grades 2-2.5, and 8th grade band plays grades 2-3. Developing each student's musical abilities and building high quality performing ensembles are the primary goals of the course.

Chorus

Students will develop the basic elements of vocal technique demonstrated through the use of warm-up exercises. They will sing in multi-part harmony, which will improve their sense of pitch and their ability to project the voice with confidence. Students will also learn the fundamentals of music theory and ear training, heightening their ability to sight-sing and read a vocal score. There will also be small group projects where 2-4 students pick a song they are passionate about and record it, make a video with their iPads, and do research on the song and artist. Solo projects are also acceptable. Regular concerts throughout the year will help students to mature in performance technique and stage presentation. Performing a varied repertoire (contemporary and classic pop, rock, with occasional excursions into Broadway, jazz and classical) will help develop an appreciation of a wide range of music.

Percussion

Students will gain practical experience in playing instruments of the percussion family. Students will develop an understanding of the core percussion instruments including snare drum, tom toms, hand held percussion instruments, and mallet instruments. Students will learn sticking systems, solve notation problems, and develop an educated interpretation of percussion parts. Students will learn and perform music written for Percussion ensembles. Discussion of marching percussion and drum set, as well as world percussion instruments will be included.

Guitar

Sixth Grade - Sixth grade guitar is an introductory one-year course with a focus on fundamentals in music. Students learn to read standard notation, tablature and chords in first position while playing in various ensembles with students of similar experience. The course will emphasize both classical and contemporary techniques of playing the guitar. The course also emphasizes team exploration as students choose their own selections for presentation in small classical and “rock project” ensembles during the course of the year.

Seventh Grade - Continuing seventh-grade guitar class is a one-year course emphasizing both intermediate Classical and Contemporary styles of music. Students play in ensembles with students of similar experience, heightening personal technique, awareness of music theory and skill in reading music. The course also emphasizes team exploration as students choose their own selections for presentation in small “rock project” ensembles at the end of the year. Students entering in seventh grade must audition and gain approval of the instructor to show mastery of sixth grade concepts.

Eighth Grade - Continuing eighth-grade guitar class is a one-year course emphasizing advanced Classical and Contemporary styles of music. Students play in ensembles with students of similar experience, heightening personal technique, awareness of music theory and skill in reading music. The course also emphasizes team exploration as students choose their own selections for presentation in small “rock project” ensembles at the end of the year. Students entering in eighth grade must audition and gain approval of the instructor to show mastery of sixth and seventh grade concepts.

Performing Arts

Drama

The drama program is designed to promote the development of each student's imagination, knowledge, problem-solving ability, understanding of human relationships, and communication skills

Sixth Grade - Sixth grade drama will emphasize basic performance skills such as improvisation, acting technique, movement, and storytelling. Special emphasis will be placed on the development of theater vocabulary, blocking on stage, character work, and creative writing. This class offers students the tools to master the fears associated not only with performance, but with public speaking, interviews, and examinations as well as many other experiences they face as they grow to young adulthood. The drama class is a safe space where students can take risks, experience theater games and creative activities that build self confidence and opportunities for success. At the end of the trimester students will present a piece that they have collaboratively written.

Seventh Grade - During the first month of class, seventh grade students will review basic improvisation and acting skills. Students will continue to hone their creative writing skills as well as expand their knowledge of acting theory and character development. Students will apply concepts and skills that are inherent to theatrical performances. They will recognize problems related to all aspects of theatrical presentation. They will design and implement solutions that are consistent with form and expressive intent. Through study and practical experiences, students will develop the physical, conceptual, and the intellectual skills associated with the crafts essential to theater. Students will perform monologues, scenes and work on a presentation to be presented at the end of the trimester.

Eighth Grade - Eighth graders will continue to build on skills from last year's work regarding theater vocabulary, improvisation and character work. Special emphasis will be placed on developing the skills and knowledge that go into mounting a production. Students will use various creative drama techniques to build an ensemble, stimulate imagination, movement, and role play with an emphasis on movement and presence. Students will focus on realistic acting, commanding audience attention, and developing a stage presence. They will understand and follow stage directions, and use proper techniques for body and voice control. Students will learn and discuss the basic elements of drama to better understand and analyze characters and scripted material. They will learn and use drama and theater vocabulary in class discussions. Students will write their own monologues and scenes. At the end of the trimester students will perform a presentation that reflects what they have learned in class.

Dance

Sixth Grade - This class is designed as an overview of several styles of dance, an introduction to creating original choreography and the basics of creating a dance film. Students will spend time exploring ballet, modern, jazz, improvisation, hip hop, and various cultural dances. They will learn and perform a group dance, created by the instructor, and a cultural dance, taught by a guest instructor. They will also have a short introduction to creating choreography by creating a short choreographic study.

Seventh Grade - This class is designed to have a more in-depth exploration of various dance styles, along with the opportunity to contribute original choreography to a class dance. Each trimester will focus on two different dance styles: Trimester One - Ballet and Modern; Trimester Two - Jazz and Improvisation; Trimester Three - Hip Hop and Cultural. Students will learn about the basic history of each of these styles. They will learn and perform a group dance, created by the instructor, and work with their fellow classmates and the instructor to co-choreograph an original class dance. They will also do a short research project on a dancer/choreographer.

Eighth Grade - This class is designed to focus on how to create choreography. Students will spend class time practicing several choreographic and composition techniques. They will have the freedom to design, choreograph, and perform their own dances. Students are encouraged to continue developing within a style of dance that they feel confident in and/or take on the challenge of exploring outside their comfort zone. They will work with their fellow classmates on developing their choreographic ideas.

Arts and Innovation

Grade 6 Foundations

All sixth grade students will be enrolled in this course during one of the three trimesters of their sixth grade year. The course will contain two six week mini courses, one which will focus on brain science, stress reduction, communication techniques, and emotional awareness. The other half of the course will focus on study skills, library resources, and digital literacy.

Computer programming

Seventh Grade - Introduction to Programming 7 is a one trimester long introductory computer science course that empowers students to create authentic artifacts and engage with computer science as a medium for creativity, communication, problem solving, and fun. Students begin the course by learning the problem-solving process, the input-output-store-process model of a computer, and how computers help humans solve problems. Students will then focus on their grade level theme, Community-Awareness, in the Digital Citizenship and Cyber Hygiene Unit where they will cover the topics Cyberbullying, Information Literacy, and Creative Credit and Copyright. In the remainder of the course students will learn fundamental programming constructs and practices in the JavaScript programming language. During this time they will also be exploring different systems used to represent information in a computer and the challenges and trade-offs posed by using them.

Eighth Grade - This introductory Computer Programming class is one trimester long and designed to give students a feel for writing computer programs. Unlike platforms such as Scratch and LabVIEW that use a visual programming language, this course uses Processing, a textual programming language similar to Javascript. Students will write code in Processing to develop static images, animations, and video games throughout the course while developing an appreciation for the technical art of computer programming. Class curriculum may be adjusted based on the level of enrolled students.

Painting & Drawing

This 2-D Art course is designed to introduce students to drawing, painting, and design through the exploration of art materials, creation of artwork, and the critique process. Students will learn the proper, safe, and productive way to function in the 2D art studio. The instruction will guide students through a series of projects that provide an introductory level understanding of the following 2D art materials: graphite, charcoal, pen & marker, ink, watercolor, acrylic, oil, collage, and mixed-media. Students will learn to use the Elements of Design (line, shape, color, texture, value) to compose artwork that carefully considers the Principles of Design (Contrast, Emphasis, Unity & Variety, Balance (Symmetry vs Asymmetry), Repetition & Pattern, Direction, Movement, Figure vs Ground, Proportion and Scale. The course identifies three major styles in art making: representation, abstraction, and non-objective imagery. Students will focus on four major components that contribute to a successful work of art: Composition, Creativity, Concept, and Craftsmanship/Skill. Students are encouraged to investigate art from various cultural and historical contexts. The students will work toward developing their own unique visual language, a language they feel confident expressing their ideas with. The course demands artwork that is a reflection of the individual, as well as who we are as a people. The pursuit of ideas and creative thinking will be continually challenged, in conjunction with the expansion of sound technical skills.

Sculpture

This course emphasizes hands on construction using the creative process. We will focus on a balance between the exploration of materials, development of technical skills, and content building. Students will be exposed to past and contemporary sculptors, and will develop new avenues of idea generation and visual problem solving. Students will work with an array of materials such as wire, wax, plaster, recyclables, photographs, fabric and fibers, paper mache, small metals and more. Projects may include jewelry making, sewing, fabric design, assemblage, carving, modeling, and other types of sculpture practices. We will aim to use everyday materials to create purposeful and non-disposable sculptures. Students will work both independently and collaboratively on projects, and strive to create a productive and creative studio environment.

Woodworking

Woodworking offers students an interesting and challenging opportunity to design and construct projects of their own choosing that are appropriate to their skill level and the length of the course. Although skill building and learning the safe use of hand and power tools are at the very heart of the course, students are also challenged to commit themselves to a high standard of craftsmanship. Throughout the process of construction, students are faced with decisions that force them to exercise their critical thinking, problem solving, and math skills as they design, lay-out, measure, and cut to exact size, the materials needed for their projects. In addition to gaining useful knowledge and skills required in the realm of woodworking, students learn to appreciate the beauty and utility of wood and wooden projects.

Ceramics

Students design and create ceramic art: sculpture and pottery. They explore hand-building techniques and are introduced to throwing-wheel skills. Students create projects that are both challenging and reflect personal interests while developing an understanding of the artistic process. A variety of kiln and glaze options allow projects to be fully functional tableware or evocative sculpture: an unlimited expression of each student's discovery of what is special. The elements of art and principles of design, project management, critical thinking, problem solving and studio etiquette are emphasized.

Think, Tinker, Make 6-8

If you have ever wished for a class that was designed by you, this is your class! Created to provide a space for broad exploration and guidance to imagine a project of your choosing, “Think, Tinker, Make!” is a place to make something great, learn to use a variety of maker tools, research a topic of interest, and create your own science experiment. Through the course, students will learn that scientific, writing, performance, and design processes are not mutually exclusive, but, rather, share common types of thinking and doing. Students will gain a habit of mind useful in all course work: design with the end in mind, then iterate. Topics covered will relate to the science, geography, and grade level theme corresponding to the grade level that students enroll in the course. What will your project be?

Digital Photography and Media Arts (6th and 7th grade - One Trimester Course)

The main objective of this course is learning to convey a message - or entire story - on the printed page, using text, photography, and graphics. "Editorial Layout" has a very strong association with magazine construction and design, and students in this course will gain valuable foundational skills necessary for a future course in publications, including yearbook. Students will be challenged to build skills with the goal of publishing a unique product at the end of the trimester.

Students will generate the photography and copy that make each page of their trimester publication, and in doing so learn the importance of collaborative process, meeting deadlines, and faithfully representing the student experience of Francis Parker Middle School.

Digital Photography and Media Arts - Yearbook Production (8th grade only - Full Year Course)

Having built foundational and intermediate skills, students will be challenged in this course to continue refining those skills while entrusting them with the responsibility to construct and publish the Middle School Yearbook from start to finish. This course is closely articulated to its counterpart in the Upper School, and students will be well positioned to continue their journey as chroniclers of the student experience at Parker.

Robotics (EV3, 7th grade only)

Seventh Grade - In this course students will learn about the engineering design process and apply it to solve a selected problem. Students will be expected to design, construct, program, and test an EV3 LEGO robot. The selected problem will engage students in inquiry, reasoning and critical thinking. Furthermore, students will learn technical skills and processes associated with the production of their robot, including fundamental build and programming strategies. Students will collaborate in small groups while maintaining an individual engineering notebook.

Robotics (VEX, 8th grade only)

Eighth Grade - Students will engage in the production of quality robots, produced from the VEX system, while developing important team-related skills. Students will be expected to give careful consideration to design choices and the overall execution of their robotics product. Connections will be made throughout the course to key scientific principles that are demonstrated by robot production. Robot production will be inspired by actual practical robotic systems. Students will be expected to keep an individual engineering notebook, and communicate their understanding and the progress of their project frequently.

Athletics and Physical Education

All Middle School students participate in four blocks of physical education or team sports practice during the week.

At Parker, we believe that athletics is an integral and valuable component of our students' overall educational experience. Athletics contribute to building school spirit and the well being of the entire student body. We believe that student-athletes benefit not only physically and emotionally by participating and competing in sports, but also that one of our fundamental responsibilities is to help student-athletes develop critical skills (e.g., teamwork, resilience, leadership, tenacity, etc.) that promote success in the classroom, in college, and beyond.

Sixth grade students participate in a Physical Education class composed of 11 sport education units. In the seventh and eighth grade, students have the opportunity to join interscholastic sports teams (boys, girls, and co-ed). Seventh and eighth grade students can elect to take a Physical Education class or join a seasonal interscholastic sports team. Our Middle School Athletics program is a great opportunity for students to begin their pursuit of athletics at the high school level. Students will be placed in groups within each team appropriate to their skill levels.

The health and welfare of our student athletes is of primary concern. Parker's Certified Athletic Trainer is available to athletes for injury evaluation during the majority of practices and home contests.

Teamwork, good citizenship, and academic achievement are expectations of all our athletes.

Sports by Season (7th and 8th grade only)

<u>Fall</u>	<u>Winter</u>	<u>Spring</u>
Cross Country	Boys Basketball	Boys Baseball
Flag Football	Boys Soccer	Boys Lacrosse
Girls Lacrosse	Cheerleading	Boys Volleyball
Girls Volleyball	Girls Soccer	Tennis (limited to 16)
Golf (limited to 16)	Girls Softball	Track and Field
Physical Education	Physical Education	Girls Basketball
		Physical Education

Character Education

Building on the Lower School STRIVE framework, character education in the Middle School is delivered both deliberately in special classes, and organically through content courses. There are two deliberate areas where content is planned and delivered: Advisory and Life Skills Weeks.

Advisory

Each student is assigned an advisor for the course of the year. Advisory meets twice a week for 50 minutes each time. The purpose of advisory is to provide a space and time for students to build a relationship with at least one teacher who will help guide them through the school year and advocate for them as needed. Advisory also increases students' sense of community, satisfies students' need to belong to a group during crucial developmental years, provides a forum to discuss Character Education topics, improves communication between the school and home, and helps to prepare students for academic success by discussing study skills, organization, and time management.

Life Skills

Life Skills Weeks fall at the end of each trimester. The purpose of these weeks is to enhance the advisory program, and create classes which can be springboards for a deeper focus in advisory. These classes involve a sharper focus on Social Emotional Learning including health and wellness, alcohol and drug awareness, healthy eating, identity development, human development and stress management.

Additional Expectations

Discovery Week (8th grade only)

Eighth Grade Discovery Week is a capstone program for the Middle School Experience. The entire class travels to locations to promote their world language acquisition, and to build cultural awareness in the week before spring break. Each year, program offerings may adjust based on interest and programmatic alignment. Recent options included Costa Rica for Spanish learners, China for Mandarin learners, France for French learners, and New Zealand, Peru or Ecuador for students who want an alternate choice, or do not take a language. Students prepare for this amazing experience beginning in October, meeting in advisory and during Global Awareness Days, to consider information about where they are traveling, to learn cultural and custom information, and to build group cohesion. Students use their travel experience as a significant part of their Middle School Passage Portfolio presentation in May. The format of Discovery Week is subject to change for the 2022-23 school year.

Portfolios

Sixth Grade - In place of a traditional first trimester report card and comments, sixth grade students use work samples and self-reflections to lead a discussion with their parents and advisors regarding the transition to middle school, including strengths, areas for growth, and goals. Students continue to curate their work and engage in reflection throughout the year. With a special focus on the year's theme of self-awareness, students then present these artifacts to highlight their achievement and growth during an advisory period celebration of learning with parents, teachers, and classmates in attendance.

Seventh Grade - Students in seventh grade will play an ongoing role in their education by developing digital portfolios that celebrate their passion for learning and reflect on their growth in academics, athletics, arts, and advisory curriculum. Students will engage with various communities and build healthy relationships in order to strive for empathy and strength of character. Portfolios will be presented to advisors, peers, and parents at the end of the year.

Eighth Grade - The Middle School Passage Presentation builds upon the grade level themes of self awareness (6th) and community awareness (7th) and focuses on the 8th grade theme of global awareness. We are dedicated and committed to establishing a curriculum that allows our students to learn about the interconnectedness of the world with an emphasis on the importance of an awareness of multiculturalism, empathy, and understanding. At the same time, students are expected to ask what is their responsibility to the global community. The presentation will also demonstrate their growth through middle school and their readiness to move onto high school. The Middle School Passage Presentation will be showcased to, and given feedback by, a panel consisting of each child's parents, invited guests, faculty, along with the parents of some of their peers and their classmates.