



Middle School Curriculum Guide

2024-2025

The Waverly Middle School

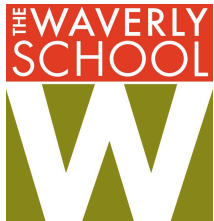
120 Waverly Dr

Pasadena, CA 91105

(626) 792-5940

Table of contents

Introduction	3
Middle School Course of Study	3
Humanities	4
Math	9
Science	12
Spanish	14
Arts Block	16
Electives	19
Physical Education	20
Farm	21
Human Development	21
Advisory	22
Flex Block, Clubs, and Affinity Spaces	23
Homework Club	23
Outdoor Education and Experiential Learning	24



The Waverly School cultivates curious, resourceful, confident learners who demonstrate intellectual engagement, critical and creative thinking, respect for individual differences, a strong awareness of personal responsibility, and an active commitment to social justice.

The Middle School Program: An Introduction

Waverly’s Middle School program builds upon the critical thinking skills developed in Elementary School. Students cultivate the skills to explore and understand complex ideas and concepts, use evidence to prepare arguments and develop the ability to communicate their ideas and perspectives clearly. The core academic curriculum comprises math, science, social studies, English, and Spanish. The program is also enhanced with an arts block of drama, visual arts, or music and quarterly electives with new and rotating offerings. All students take physical education (PE) and Farm classes during the year.

A significant goal of Middle School is to prepare students for the academic challenges of high school. The program emphasizes the development of strong and consistent work habits and solid skills in writing, mathematics, and analytical and critical thinking.

A strong commitment to Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) is present throughout the curriculum and in focused classes such as daily advisory, human development, and flex time.

Middle School Course of Study

Seventh Grade	Eighth Grade
Social Studies	Social Studies
English	English
Math 7	Math 8, Algebra 1
Science	Science
Spanish A or B	Spanish A or B
Arts (semester-long, two per year)	Arts (semester-long, two per year)
Elective Block (Quarterly Rotation)	Elective Block (Quarterly Rotation)
PE (Two Quarters)	PE (Two Quarters)
Farm (Two Quarters)	Farm (Two Quarters)
Human Development	Human Development
Advisory	Advisory
Homework Club	Homework Club

Humanities

Waverly Middle School students study the humanities as a two-year program during their Middle School experience. The curriculum covers American history and literature and World history and literature in rotating years. Students discuss historical events through to contemporary events and are asked to make connections between texts and events throughout history. Collaborative work is encouraged to exchange ideas, learn civil discourse, value perspective, and deepen critical thinking and understanding of complex issues. The curriculum is designed to encourage interdisciplinary collaboration between English classes and social studies classes and students are encouraged to make connections to their study in other disciplines as well.

Humanities A

American History

Essential Questions:

How can the study of American history from diverse perspectives help us understand and appreciate the complexities of our nation's past and present?

What are the different ways individuals and communities have resisted oppression and sought to create a more equitable society throughout American history?

In what ways have systemic inequalities been challenged and transformed throughout American history, and how can we continue to address and dismantle the inequalities today?

How have historically excluded groups shaped and influenced the course of American history, and what lessons can we learn from their experiences?

American history explores various topics and themes that invite more awareness, critical thinking, and perspectives of lived experiences often not mentioned in the sphere of education. Discussions include a focus on periods that are particularly important to modern debates about the role of the United States in the world and important issues related to race, class, and gender. Hands-on activities and project-based work are also a component of the class and students explore and learn about different parts of the United States tangibly. Students work on independent research projects to deepen their understanding of the material such as the understanding of the Native American experience. The subjects covered in depth may include the decades before and after the U.S. Civil War, the rise of the U.S. as a major superpower, and the developments of the more recent past. This course will deepen students' critical thinking skills and strengthen their document analysis skills. The year of study culminates in a research project related to modern-day issues and their historical background.

American History (continued)

Essential Skills Learned:

Seventh Grade:

- *Begin to analyze historical events, identify simple cause-and-effect relationships, and recognize different perspectives*
- *Understand the basics of timelines and historical periods.*
- *Learn to locate and use primary and secondary sources, and start using evidence to support simple arguments.*
- *Read and interpret basic maps, and understand the geographical contexts of key historical events.*
- *Write clear and concise paragraphs about historical topics and participate in class discussions.*
- *Begin to compare basic aspects of different cultures and historical periods.*
- *Start understanding and discussing the experiences and perspectives of people from different times and places.*
- *Identify and explain simple causes of historical changes.*
- *Use digital tools for simple research.*

Eighth Grade:

- *Analyze complex historical events, understand multi-faceted causes and effects, and evaluate multiple perspectives critically.*
- *Understand and create more detailed timelines and grasp the significance of different historical periods and eras.*
- *Conduct more thorough research using a variety of primary and secondary sources, and critically evaluate their reliability and relevance.*
- *Interpret detailed maps and understand complex geographical contexts and their historical implications.*
- *Write well-structured essays with clear arguments, supported by evidence. Engage in thoughtful and respectful class discussions.*
- *Compare and contrast different cultures, civilizations, and historical periods in depth.*
- *Develop a nuanced understanding of the experiences and perspectives of people from various times and places, and discuss these insights with empathy.*
- *Use digital tools effectively for research, collaborative projects, and sophisticated presentations.*



American Literature

Essential Questions:

How are concepts of justice and injustice explored in American literature?

How does literature help us understand the experiences of others?

In what ways can reading about diverse perspectives foster empathy and understanding?

How do characters grapple with their responsibilities to themselves and their communities?

What can we learn from these characters about ourselves and our roles in promoting justice and equity in our own lives?

Students engage with diverse texts that explore themes of identity, power, and social justice. The curriculum includes works by authors from various backgrounds and identities. Through these texts, students examine complexities of race, gender, class, and other aspects of identity, fostering empathy and understanding. Class discussions, writing assignments, and projects encourage students to connect literature to contemporary issues, prompting critical thinking about equity and justice. Students explore how characters navigate systemic challenges, use their voices for change, and see themselves in relation to their communities. By analyzing historical contexts and literary themes students gain a deeper appreciation for the role of literature in reflecting and shaping society. Through this process, the class empowers students to become thoughtful, informed, and active participants in their communities. Students develop a nuanced understanding of American literature and its relevance to their lives and the world around them.

Essential Skills Learned:

Seventh Grade:

- *Read developmentally appropriate texts.*
- *Write using basic grammar rules, vocabulary, and punctuation.*
- *Write about their own personal experiences.*
- *Know some beginning outline structures for writing rough drafts.*
- *Have basic keyboarding knowledge to use laptops.*
- *Identify major literary devices (metaphor, simile).*
- *Identify themes.*
- *Use graphic organizers to write rough drafts.*



Eighth Grade:

- *Speak in front of the class.*
- *Read out loud.*
- *Comprehend grade-level texts.*
- *Annotate.*
- *Create slide presentations.*
- *Write a five-paragraph essay and include a works cited page.*
- *Be able to identify and use the following literary devices:*
 - *hyperbole, dramatic irony, personification, onomatopoeia, alliteration, allegory, protagonist, antagonist, symbolism, motif, connotation, and denotation*
- *Identify commonly confused words.*

Humanities B

World History

Essential Questions:

Why do some civilizations prosper more than others?

How do civilizations develop?

What makes a group an empire? What are the key political elements of an empire?

How do major belief systems develop and help to structure societies?

World History offers a comprehensive examination of ancient and medieval history, primarily centered on non-Western societies. Throughout this course, we delve into the evolution of social and political structures spanning from the Neolithic Revolution to the onset of the Early Modern Period. Students will actively foster critical thinking skills, scrutinize the narratives that have been historically emphasized or marginalized, and establish relevancies to our present-day world by examining ongoing global developments.

Essential Skills Learned:

Seventh Grade:

- *Begin to analyze historical events, identify simple cause-and-effect relationships, and recognize different perspectives.*
- *Understand the basics of timelines and historical periods.*
- *Learn to locate and use primary and secondary sources, and start using evidence to support simple arguments.*
- *Read and interpret basic maps, and understand the geographical contexts of key historical events.*
- *Write clear and concise paragraphs about historical topics and participate in class discussions*
- *Begin to compare basic aspects of different cultures and historical periods.*
- *Start understanding and discussing the experiences and perspectives of people from different times and places.*
- *Identify and explain simple causes of historical changes.*
- *Use digital tools for simple research.*

Eighth Grade:

- *Analyze complex historical events, understand multi-faceted causes and effects, and evaluate multiple perspectives critically.*
- *Understand and create more detailed timelines and grasp the significance of different historical periods and eras.*
- *Conduct more thorough research using a variety of primary and secondary sources, and critically evaluate their reliability and relevance.*
- *Interpret detailed maps and understand complex geographical contexts and their historical implications.*
- *Write well-structured essays with clear arguments, supported by evidence. Engage in thoughtful and respectful class discussions.*
- *Compare and contrast different cultures, civilizations, and historical periods in depth.*

World History (continued)

- *Develop a nuanced understanding of the experiences and perspectives of people from various times and places, and discuss these insights with empathy.*
- *Use digital tools effectively for research, collaborative projects, and sophisticated presentations.*

World Literature

Essential Questions:

Are we obligated to take care of each other? Why?

Is there anything good that comes from tragedy?

Why should we care about what happens to characters in books?

Why do stories matter?

Middle School World Literature offers a partial survey of literature from around the world, with an emphasis on literature produced by and about people who have faced oppression and marginalization and who have nevertheless found ways to tell their stories. Students encounter a variety of literary and artistic forms, styles, and perspectives. Students study the structure and literary elements of each text and consider the many ways in which political and social circumstances shape its style and content. Students actively practice critical thinking and close reading skills, apply historical knowledge to literary analysis, and express and develop their responses and interpretations in regular class discussions and writing assignments.

Essential Skills Learned:

Seventh Grade:

- *Read developmentally appropriate texts.*
- *Write using basic grammar rules, vocabulary, and punctuation.*
- *Write about their own experiences.*
- *Know some beginning outline structures for writing rough drafts.*
- *Have basic keyboarding knowledge to use laptops.*
- *Identify major literary devices (metaphor, simile).*
- *Identify themes.*
- *Use graphic organizers to write rough drafts.*

Eighth Grade:

- *Speak in front of the class.*
- *Read out loud.*
- *Comprehend grade-level texts.*
- *Annotate.*
- *Create slide presentations.*
- *Write a five-paragraph essay and include a works cited page.*
- *Be able to identify and use the following literary devices:*
 - *hyperbole, dramatic irony, personification, onomatopoeia, alliteration, allegory, protagonist, antagonist, symbolism, motif, connotation, and denotation.*
- *Identify commonly confused words.*

Math

The math program is designed to cultivate a deep understanding and appreciation of mathematics. By emphasizing critical thinking, problem-solving, and real-world applications, the program aims to develop not only proficiency but also a lifelong love for learning. The curriculum integrates collaborative learning and project-based instruction to create an engaging and supportive environment for all students.

Some Mathematical Practices Applicable to All Grade Levels

- Make sense of problems and persevere in solving them.
- Reason abstractly and quantitatively.
- Construct and critique arguments.
- Model situations with mathematics.
- Use mathematical tools appropriately.

Math 7

Essential Questions:

How do we apply proportional relationships to represent and solve real-world and mathematical problems?

How do we use operations with rational numbers, expressions, and equations to model and solve problems?

How do we use geometric concepts and relationships to describe and interpret the world around us?

How do we draw inferences about populations based on samples and collected data?

The seventh-grade math curriculum is designed to further develop students' problem solving skills and algebraic thinking. Abstract representations of various equations are introduced to stretch students' understanding and to encourage them to push themselves further. Emphasis is placed on developing each student's conceptual understanding of mathematics through classroom activities, labs, multimedia explorations, group discussions, and class projects. Students are asked to solve for unknown quantities, and this work with variables not only helps their mathematical development, but their logical reasoning as well. Multiple strategies are employed to aid the students in solving various problems including graphical representation, creation of number stories, and hands-on manipulatives. Seventh grade also offers further opportunities for students to discover the universality of mathematical principles. Students start to recognize math as the universal language that humanity has used to try and answer some of its greatest questions. Upon completion of this course, students will be prepared for the curriculum of the curriculum offerings of eighth grade.

Math 7 (continued)

Essential skills learned:

- Use proportional relationships to solve real-world and mathematical problems.
- Perform operations with rational numbers, including fractions and integers.
- Compute percent change, including markup, discount, tax, and tip in the context of real-world situations.
- Use the order of operations, distributive property, principles of simplifying equations, and combining like terms to generate equivalent expressions.
- Solve real-life and mathematical problems using expressions and equations.
- Draw, construct, and describe geometrical figures and the relationships between them.
- Solve real-life and mathematical problems involving angle measure, area, surface area, and volume.
- Use random sampling to draw inferences about a population.
- Draw comparative inferences about two populations.
- Investigate chance and develop, use, and evaluate probability models.

Math 8

Essential Questions

How do we use expressions and equations, including linear equations, to model and solve real-world and mathematical problems?

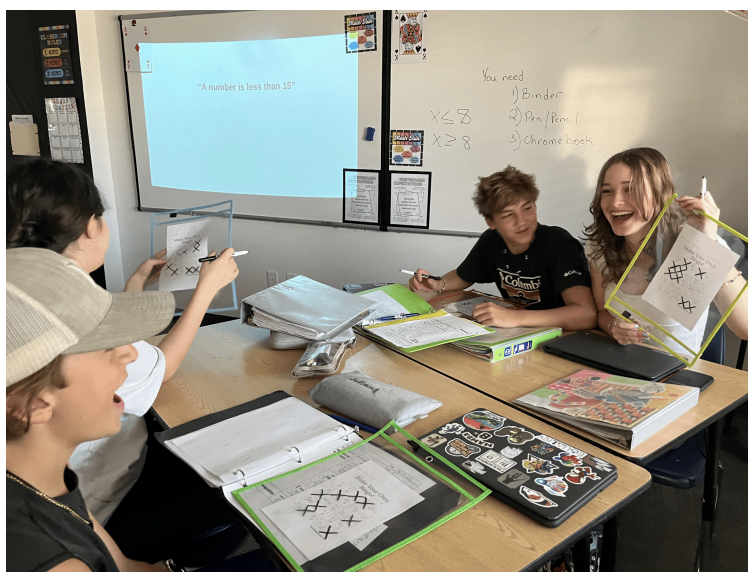
How do we use functions to describe quantitative relationships?

How do we use the geometric properties of two- and three-dimensional figures to model and solve real-world problems?

In the eighth-grade math curriculum, students deepen their understanding of pre-algebra and bridge their understanding to high school algebra. The curriculum covers advanced number sense, linear equations, geometric transformations, and data analysis, emphasizing critical thinking and problem-solving. Lessons also incorporate collaborative projects, technology, and real-world applications. Students engage in hands-on activities, mathematical discussions, and inquiry-based learning.

Essential Skills Learned:

- Explore irrational numbers and use rational numbers to approximate them.
- Work with radicals and integer exponents.
- Understand the connection between proportional relationships, lines, and linear equations.
- Solve linear equations.
- Define, evaluate, and compare functions.
- Use functions to model relationships between quantities.
- Understand congruence and similarity of geometric figures.
- Understand and apply the Pythagorean theorem.
- Solve real-world and mathematical problems involving the volume of cylinders, cones, and spheres.
- Investigate patterns of association in data involving two variables



Algebra 1

Essential Questions:

How do we use the principles of solving equations to find the answer to specific types of problems (linear, quadratic, exponential, radical)?

How do we identify functional relationships and how can the different types of functions (linear, quadratic, exponential) be used to model real-world situations?

How do we examine a problem and formulate a mathematical model, including tables, graphs, functions, equations, and inequalities, to solve that problem?

Algebra 1 builds on pre-algebra foundations and introduces students to more complex algebraic concepts. The curriculum includes linear equations and inequalities, functions, systems of equations, polynomials, and quadratic equations. The curriculum emphasizes inquiry-based learning, project-based instructions, and the use of manipulatives and technology. Students solve real-world problems, engage in mathematical discussions, and collaborate on projects, preparing them for high school math with a solid understanding of algebraic principles and problem-solving skills.

Essentials skills:

- Understand and write expressions, equations, and inequalities to represent mathematical quantities and situations.
- Solve equations and inequalities in one variable.
- Solve systems of equations.
- Represent and solve equations and inequalities graphically.
- Understand the concept of a function and use function notation.
- Build and graph a function that models a relationship between two quantities, including linear, quadratic, exponential, absolute value, and piecewise functions.
- Manipulate and build new functions from existing functions.
- Perform operations with rational numbers, including radicals and exponents.
- Perform arithmetic operations on polynomials.
- Summarize, represent, and interpret data, including measures of central tendency and variation

Science

Middle School science is an integrated course that explores topics of life science, physical science, earth science, and engineering. Learning will build upon prior experiences, content knowledge, and skills. The [SEUPUP/Lab-Aids Issues in Science](#) program is aligned with the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) to guide student learning, lessons, and inquiry. Students use the science and engineering practices: asking questions, defining problems, making predictions, planning and carrying out investigations, collecting and analyzing data, constructing explanations, designing and evaluating solutions, developing models, engaging in argument using evidence, communicating information, using computational thinking, and participating in discussions to share findings and debate claims. Integration of technology is embedded throughout the course.

Integrated Science (Seventh and Eighth Grade)

Essential Questions:

- *How can scientific knowledge and evidence be used to solve real-world problems and make informed decisions?*
- *What are the properties and behavior of matter, and how do they explain the physical phenomena we observe?*
- *How do ecosystems function, and how are they impacted by interactions between organisms and their environment?*
- *How are traits inherited and passed on through generations, and how do variations in reproductive processes contribute to genetic diversity?*
- *How does the process of evolution explain the diversity of species and the adaptations of organisms over time?*
- *How do the different body systems interact and function together to support the overall health and well-being of an organism?*
- *How do cells function and contribute to the growth, development, and maintenance of living organisms?*
- *How can chemical reactions be used to provide energy?*
- *What determines how objects move in space?*
- *How does water move above and below Earth's surface, and how does it affect the land as it moves?*

Over the course of two years, the Middle School science program covers eight units in life science, earth science, and physical science. Classes are mixed age, with eighth-grade students mentoring seventh-grade students to develop proficiency in the practices of science and engineering. Each spring, seventh-grade students complete a survey to help choose the units for their eighth-grade year.

Sample Units Year One

- Ecology
- Chemistry of Materials
- Reproduction
- Evolution

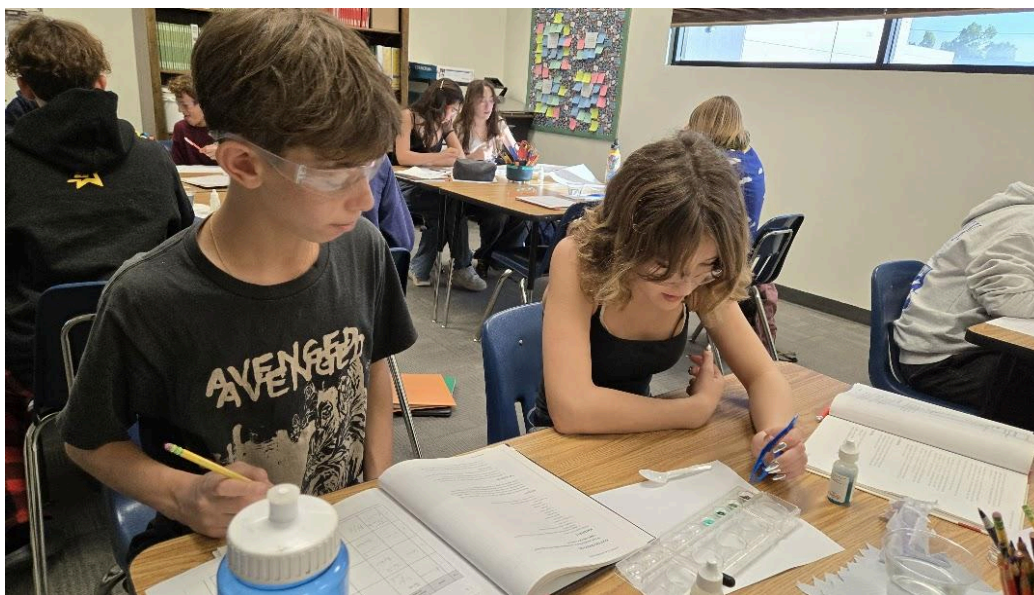
Integrated Science (Seventh and Eighth Grade, continued)

Sample Units Year Two

- Solar System and Beyond
- Chemical Reactions
- Body Systems
- From Cells to Organisms

Essential Skills Learned Seventh and Eighth Grades:

- *Asking relevant questions*
- *Analyzing and interpreting data*
- *Communicating ideas and concepts*
- *Constructing explanations of scientific phenomena*
- *Developing and using models*
- *Engaging in evidence-based argument*
- *Engineering design solutions*
- *Managing tasks and sharing opportunities in groups*
- *Organizing data for analysis*
- *Organizing scientific information in a science journal*
- *Planning and carrying out investigations*



Spanish

Our program encourages students to approach the language on an academic level and become familiar with utilizing resources of the Latino community, which includes Spanish-language music, film, art, etc. Cultural celebrations are all a part of the curriculum as well. This class aims to build a strong foundation for language learners and help students succeed in their high school language courses. Since there are students who have varying levels of Spanish speaking proficiency, the Middle School program divides students into separate groups per level. Classes are separated by new/beginning Spanish-speaking students, intermediate Spanish-speaking students, and native/almost fluent Spanish-speaking students. Students are divided based on their Spanish-speaking abilities. All of the Spanish classes focus on developing fluency. Everyone will learn to construct questions, answers, and commands, and pronounce essential vocabulary.

Spanish A

Spanish A delves into the Spanish language and students build an appreciation for the varied Spanish-speaking cultures and countries. Students develop fluency, learn to construct questions, answers, commands, and pronounce essential vocabulary. Students work collaboratively with other students to build proficiency in speaking and listening in Spanish. Students participate in individual and group projects and presentations as well as in-class discussions and assignments.

Essential Questions:

How does language influence our understanding of the diverse cultures within the Spanish-speaking world?

What methods can we use to communicate effectively in Spanish while being mindful of cultural differences?

In what ways does collaborative learning contribute to our language proficiency and appreciation of Spanish-speaking cultures?

What strategies can enhance our pronunciation and fluency in spoken Spanish?

Essential Skills Learned:

- ***Reading*** - Students should read with fluency through questions, answers, commands, and targeted vocabulary with good pronunciation. Students may read short stories, a novel, or other appropriate reading material.
- ***Writing*** - Structure/language skills and grammar incorporated in students writing: grammar targets for each quarter of each level of Spanish. In the first semester, students learn sentences containing a subject and a verb. Additionally, they learn how verbs and negative expressions are used correctly in the present tense. In the second semester, students learn commands, direct objects, present progressive tense, and introduction to past tense verbs.
- ***Listening*** - This skill develops naturally as they listen and read, during the year.
- ***Speaking*** - Speak spontaneously through repetition and memorization of our daily conversations. Students will use the number of target vocabulary terms for each unit or story learned in class.
- ***Cultural Awareness:*** Understanding the cultural contexts and nuances of the language, enhancing students' communication and appreciation for diverse perspectives.

Spanish B

In Spanish B, students learn in-depth details about having natural conversations in Spanish for specific environments. Students participate in ongoing discussions about the differences in Spanish culture. Spanish B focuses on developing comprehension and literacy. Students build knowledge of travel and traditions in Spanish-speaking countries in order to reinforce exchanging information respectfully with a Spanish speaker. Conversations regarding activities between countries allow students to share perspectives on their experiences. This class aims to nourish a stronger connection to Spanish culture, and at the same time, identify cultural practices that shape our differences. Spanish B enables students to head into their high school language classes with more awareness and confidence.

Essential Questions:

How do cultural practices and traditions in Spanish-speaking countries influence conversational norms and expectations?

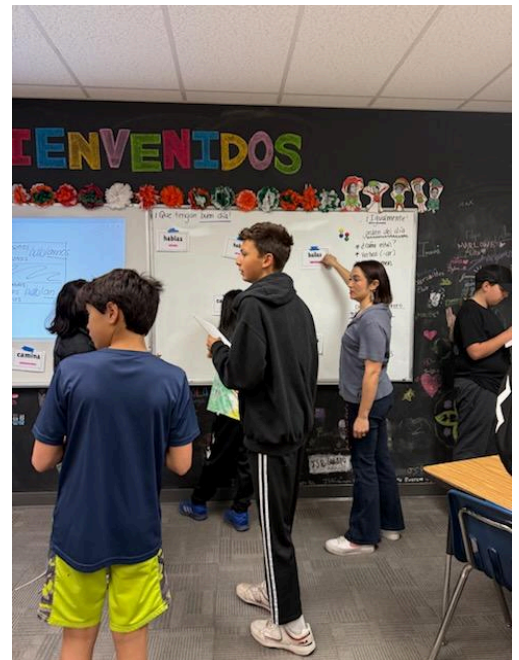
In what ways can we engage in meaningful discussions about the differences in Spanish cultures while practicing natural conversation skills?

How does building comprehension and literacy in Spanish contribute to our ability to exchange information respectfully with Spanish speakers?

How can sharing our personal travel experiences and perspectives deepen our understanding of cultural differences and strengthen our connection to Spanish culture?

Essential Skills Learned:

- ***Reading:*** Students should read with fluency through questions, answers, commands, and targeted vocabulary with good pronunciation.
- ***Listening:*** This skill develops naturally as they listen and read during the year.
- ***Writing:*** Structure/language skills and grammar are incorporated in the students' writing with grammar targets for each quarter of each level of Spanish. In the first semester, students learn that sentences contain a subject and a verb. Additionally, they learn how verbs and negative expressions are used correctly in the present tense. In the second semester, students learn commands, direct objects, present progressive tense, and an introduction to past tense verbs.
- ***Speaking:*** Students learn to speak spontaneously, a skill acquired naturally through repetition and memorization of our daily conversations. Students will use the number of target vocabulary terms for each unit or story.
- ***Cultural Awareness:*** Understanding the cultural contexts and nuances of the language, enhancing students' communication and appreciation for diverse perspectives.



Arts Block

Middle school students choose two semester-long arts classes per year and meet three times per week. Arts classes tap into students' innate creativity and provide a space to connect with peers outside of their academic blocks. The arts teach important skills that translate to other classes in addition to providing the skills and knowledge for students to reach their artistic goals within the art discipline.

Visual Arts

Essential Questions:

How can I express myself through visual arts? What kind of materials are best to communicate what I want to express?

What kind of style can I choose to deliver the message visually? How can my art be perceived?

What can I do to create an impactful artwork? Why does where I see or place my artwork matter?

Why is visual art important to me? How can I grow better as a visual artist?

How can I create with other people? How can I continue exploring more tools and materials?

How can I continue improving my art skills?

Students in the visual arts programs acquire art skills by using the rich exposure to exhibitions, art, and cultural and physical references in the Los Angeles area. For example the Getty's PST ART: Art & Science Collide, which explores the intersections and influences between art and science, provides inspiration and context for Waverly artists. Within this context of research and experimentation, young artists create art and develop skills for communicating visual work. The program utilizes a wide variety of recycled materials, as well as tools and methods to enhance student work. The program employs the Principles of Art & Design, using dry and wet mediums, and students learn Art History and Contemporary Art while setting positive habits and collaboration. By engaging in this holistic approach to culturally responsive and progressive art education, visual art students at the Middle School cultivate creativity, technical skills, and a deeper appreciation for the arts, empowering them to contribute meaningfully to the world through their unique perspectives and talents.

Essential Skills Learned:

- *Being a mindful creator. Your work will impact a viewer, and a broader audience.*
- *Creating a respectful social and spatial environment for all while working.*
- *Embracing and trusting your process.*
- *Learning from each other. A teacher is not the only person who knows things.*
- *Working hard, trying new things, trying hard.*
- *Being open to uncomfortable situations.*
- *Being participative and supportive in art critiques. Following art critique directions, and sharing your ideas respectfully by also using your best manners.*
- *Being responsible with the space and materials you work with.*
- *Leaving the space better than how you found it.*

Drama

Essential Questions:

Who am I, where am I, what do I want, what are my circumstances, what are my relationships, what is my moment before, where am I going (a moment after), and what is at stake for my character?

How do I begin to employ the elements of building a fully alive scene/character that is human and believable?

What are the tools and how do I use my tools as an actor to create character?

How do I find my way to collaboration as a scene partner, as a scriptwriter, or as a deviser on the direction of our work as a team?

How do I continue to build upon what I am learning each day, each project, for the next creative endeavor?

The Waverly Middle School drama arts block is committed to providing a safe and creative environment for every student. Our focus is on group work, play, and storytelling. During our class meetings, we employ a variety of theater games, use improvisation techniques, and work on scripted or original scenes to help students have a dynamic relationship with their scene partners and the art of acting. Having fun, jumping into an ensemble, and creating detailed characters and stories inside of a homemade structure is our learning platform.

Blank scenes, scripted material (with age-appropriate content), and original work from our group are the source of our daily work. All students are broken into groups or partners to collaborate and rehearse each assigned project, sometimes in small cohorts and sometimes in front of the company. The building blocks of listening and responding, relationship, place/environment, objective, stakes, and style are introduced to these beginning actors, as a practical way to make a solid theatrical piece with a beginning, middle, and end. After 5-10 minutes of individual groups rehearsing, we begin the process of collaborating with the whole class. Each scene partnership works in front of the group, taking direction, adjustments, and student suggestions. In this way, the actors, on their feet, can keep “growing” their scripted or original material. They can begin to understand and feel a sense of ownership of their creative process as they rehearse toward performance. Generous collaboration, technical fluency, freedom, and fun are the goals of our Middle School theatrical endeavors. In each semester, Middle School drama students offer their work to the community in two to three shared performances with the music, art, and creative writing blocks. Offering our devised and rehearsed pieces to friends, teachers, and family gives these young actors a creative goal and the precious experience of collaboration and preparation for live or recorded performances.

Essential skills:

- *Learning and using the elements of building a scene.*
- *Listening/Responding/Acting from the Truth of the moment and from your authentic impulse.*
- *Practicing presence by putting the focus on your partner, listening/responding, and working from the moment. Connecting is PRESENCE.*
- *Showing up prepared to work, grow, change, and be in the process of building work.*
- *Showing up to work from a place of supporting other students in their process.*

Drama (continued)

- *An ongoing practice of interpretation of your material from the page to the stage. In other words, bringing material to life by creating living breathing human characters, inside a set of circumstances, so that you are believing and living inside of your story so that the audience is with you believing it too.*
- *Being an active and contributing member of an ensemble of players, co-creating and making every effort to be “part of” as opposed to “separate from” in all of your work.*

Music

Essential Questions:

How do we take space for ourselves while making space for others in a collaborative musical environment?

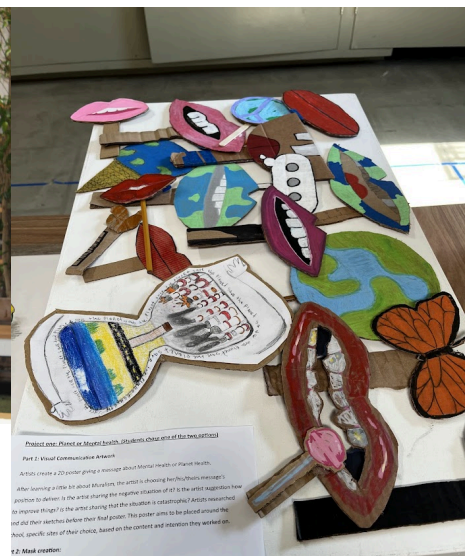
How can we use music and performance to spark connections between ourselves and our audiences?

How do our efforts and approaches to music class compare to our approaches to other subjects? How can we apply the habits of practice and rehearsal to other school subjects or areas of our lives?

In music class, the primary focus is to create and sustain a fun, nurturing, and cooperative environment for students to explore and express their creativity in a way that positively contributes to the whole ensemble. Students learn how to work together as a band. During class, students practice learning songs and rehearsing them together as a group. A band is a sum of all of its parts, which means that in addition to working attentively during class, it is also each student’s duty to the band to practice at home to learn their assignments so that they can put their best effort forth during rehearsals and adequately contribute to the ensemble. Students rehearse material in preparation for performances at Arts Showcases held each semester. Performing live music for an audience is also designed to help students grow more comfortable being seen and heard, as well as to help spread joy and galvanize our community through the power of music.

Essential Skills:

- *Arrives to class on time, prepared with necessary materials.*
- *Is focused, engaged, and well-behaved during class.*
- *Embraces collaboration and acts in a manner that supports, rather than disparages, their peers.*
- *Knows how and when to take space for themselves and make space for others.*
- *Demonstrates progress and evidence of practice outside of class time.*
- *Connects subject-specific skills to other aspects of school work and life.*



Electives

Middle School students need choice to meet their burgeoning desire for autonomy and independence. Quarterly electives enable Middle School students to explore interests and passions in classes of their choice. Students choose their electives four times a year. Classes are taught by teachers outside of their academic specialty. Teachers can connect outside of the academic classes with their students through a shared passion or interest. Elective offerings are vast and new offerings are added regularly to reflect student interest. Some recent offerings include:

- Japanese Language and Culture
- Canine Connections
- Crafting Club
- Fashion Elective
- Screenwriting
- Film Appreciation
- Know Your City
- Typing
- Video Editing
- Yoga
- Creative Writing
- Strategic Games
- French Food, Film, and Cultural Appreciation
- The Data of Sports



Physical Education

Essential Questions:

Why is it essential to be physically active every day?

What are the physical and mental benefits of participating in sports?

What is one thing you learned about the activity?

What did you learn about yourself/group during the activity?

What are the five benefits of stretching?

This course is directed at Middle School physical education students. Students will participate in a combination of team sports, lifetime and individual activities, and fitness activities throughout the semester. This guide will also encourage and develop appropriate cooperative and social behavior necessary to interact with a group to achieve a common goal. Emphasis will be placed on developing personal attitudes, behaviors, and values in addition to addressing health-related fitness concepts and their use towards a lifetime of physical movement and the achievement of optimal health.

Essential skills:

- *Students will develop an understanding of skills and rules in various sports as well as comprehending the importance of good health and fitness for everyone.*
- *Students will exhibit responsible personal and social behavior that respects self and others in physical activity settings.*
- *Students will value physical activity for health enjoyment, challenge, and social interaction/team building.*
- *Students will use principles of motor learning to establish, monitor, and meet goals for motor skill development.*
- *Students will identify and demonstrate acceptable responses to challenges, success, and failures in physical activity.*
- *Students will describe and demonstrate how movement skills learned in one physical activity can be transferred and used to help learn another physical activity.*



Farm

Essential Questions:

How can we work together as a community to create and sustain a productive, healthy farm environment as a response to currently accepted food systems?

What are the basic needs and cycles of plants, and how can we help them grow and thrive as seasons change?

What cultural significance do different foods hold, and how do they reflect the traditions, beliefs, and histories of diverse communities

How does being mindful and present in nature affect our overall well-being?

What can we discover when we explore different areas of the farm as individuals?

The Middle School farm program strives to offer a place for students to establish connections between nature and nourishment. The program draws from diverse forms of knowledge to provide students with opportunities to interact with the natural environment, think critically about food systems and human roles within them; and create reciprocal relationships within the larger community and diverse cultures.

Essential Skills Learned:

- *Demonstrate collaborative teamwork through working together to meet a goal.*
- *Demonstrate responsible leadership.*
- *Understanding principles of gardening science.*
- *Practice mindfulness as a tool to calm the body and mind.*
- *Develop cultural awareness for farming practices and food cultures and traditions.*
- *Develop basic food preparation skills.*
- *Understand and use sustainable composting practices.*

Human Development

Essential Questions:

Identity - Who am I in my community?

Inclusion - How do I treat others within and outside of my community who are different from me?

Relationships and Conflict Resolution - How do I navigate healthy and unhealthy relationships?

Overall Well-Being- How can I make the best decisions for myself, taking peer pressure into account?

The term Human Development encompasses a breadth of topics that people experience over a lifetime including physical, mental, social, and emotional changes. We understand that these conversations can cover sensitive topics which is why we want to ensure that your children feel informed and prepared as they embark on their unique developmental journeys. Ultimately we want to equip our students with the knowledge and skills to feel confident as they enter each new chapter in their lives.

According to the World Health Organization, health is “a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity,” and wellness is, “an active process through which people become aware of, and make choices toward, a more successful existence” (National Wellness Institute, 2015).

Human Development (continued)

At Waverly, the Human Development and Wellness program is a positive approach to living that emphasizes the whole person, not just a physically healthy lifestyle. It is the integration of body and mind and the appreciation that everything we do, think, feel, and believe has an impact on our health. This manifests within each division of the school in a way that is developmentally appropriate for the age and stage of an elementary, middle, or high school student.

Essential Skills Learned:

- *Students will be able to correctly identify body parts in the reproductive system.*
- *Students will understand the definitions of gender, sex assigned at birth, and sexuality to affirm their own and others' diverse identities.*
- *Students will be able to make safe and appropriate decisions for themselves around substance use and/or sexual activity.*
- *Students will be able to define what it means to have consent and what it means to give consent.*
- *Students will be empowered with information about birth control and sexually transmitted infections for their physical health and well-being.*
- *Students will be able to recognize the difference between healthy and unhealthy relationships.*

Advisory

Every student is assigned an advisor for the two years that they are in Middle School. Advisory meets five times in our seven-day cycle. Students develop a close and supportive relationship with their advisor and with the other students in their advisory. Advisory supports students' social and academic growth and provides each student with a safe place to be seen, heard, and valued. In advisory, students build relationships with their peers and teachers outside of the academic curriculum. Students learn to support and to be supported socially, emotionally, and academically. The structure of the advisory program is rooted in the Responsive Classroom framework. Responsive Classroom is an approach to teaching and discipline that is rooted in the belief that social-emotional learning is as important as academic learning and creates safe, joyful classrooms that support student academic growth by utilizing developmentally appropriate strategies for engagement. The structure for Middle School advisory meetings includes greetings, announcements, acknowledgments, and activities.

Flex Block, Clubs, and Affinity Spaces

Flex block offers students flexibility during the week to participate in clubs and activities. Clubs are student-created and facilitated by teachers in the Middle School. Clubs offer an opportunity for students to connect with other students over a shared interest. Some clubs have included:

- Skateboarding Club
- D&D Club
- Sephora Club
- Slime Club
- Spiderman Club
- Chill Zone

The school provides spaces for students to meet in identity-based affinity groups facilitated by teachers. The purpose of these groups is to support, affirm, dialogue, reflection, and joy. Some of the affinity spaces offered are:

- Asian American Affinity Space
- LGBTQIA Affinity Space
- Latine Affinity Space
- Black Student Affinity Space
- Jewish Affinity Space
- Neurodiversity Space

Homework Club

All students in the Middle School have one block in each seven-day rotation for homework club facilitated by the learning specialist. In addition to support for homework assignments, Homework Club provides check-ins for students to learn about Middle School procedures and technology and provides a space in the schedule to teach the executive functioning skills necessary for academic success.



Outdoor Education and Experiential Learning

Outdoor education trips and field trips provide important experiences for student learning. Outdoor education trips build the student's outdoor skills, resilience, and independence, and offer opportunities for community building. Field trips offer students real-world experiences for learning and connect learning beyond the walls of the classroom. Students gain a deeper understanding through these experiences and also learn about themselves in relation to the greater community. Some field trips recently taken include:

- Astrocamp
- Field trip to Historic Filipinotown
- Caltech talk
- California African-American Art Museum
- A Noise Within
- The Armory Art Center
- California Science Center
- Wolf Connection
- Spanish Class Restaurant Excursions
- Spring Camping Trip
- Annual Beach Trip

