



The Middle School

Philosophy

The Middle School at Bay Farm Montessori Academy is a learning community that is based on the educational philosophy of Maria Montessori. It is typified by active, engaged, and meaningful learning, holistic approaches, respect for the individual, and collaborative enterprise. Our curriculum is integrated, appropriately demanding, and rigorous. Small group and individualized instruction is made possible through a low student/teacher ratio. Students are highly encouraged and taught to be self-directed, independent, reflective, and respectful.

Assessment

We assess students through observation in the classroom, subject tests and quizzes, essay writing, portfolio development, project presentations, and standardized testing. We work closely with individual students to help them strive for their personal best and to reach their full potential. Traditional percentile grades along with narrative reports are communicated to parents through twice-yearly progress reports and parent/teacher conferences.

Middle School Curriculum

HUMANITIES

The humanities program is a synthesis of literature, social studies, geography, and history covering a range of topics and subjects that are appropriate for twelve- to fourteen-year-old children. Instead of using one particular text, we draw from a variety of sources, thus offering differences in style, insight, and opinion on the issues we examine. Over time, students in this "great discussion," modeled on the Socratic dialogue tradition, learn to formulate and express their ideas. Assignment choices in the Humanities are based on a multiple intelligences approach.

WRITING

Creative writing is taught through seminar style discussions and individual writing conferences. Individual and peer critiques are used extensively to improve and expand student writing. A variety of writing genres are introduced and reviewed. Emphasis is placed on the Writing Process.

SCIENCE

Each topic includes hands-on labs, textbook assignments, journal articles, research into the lives of important scientists in a field, and history and math applications where applicable. Current events in science as well as relevant historical issues constitute continuous strands for

discussion and research. Particular emphasis is placed on inquiry skills, the scientific method, and lab skills. In most science topics, there is reading outside of the textbook. Skills involving evolving technology are emphasized.

MATH

In 7th grade, the students study Transitional math, and in 8th grade, the students study Pre-Algebra and Algebra. Students use higher-order thinking skills to solve problems in relation to a variety of challenges, from practical money transactions to algebraic relationships, exploring in-depth number properties, simple equations, higher measurements, computer calculation and graphics, and geometric proofs. The math program emphasizes problem-solving, everyday application, and the use of technology and reading, while developing and maintaining basic skills.

Extra-Curricular Activities

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Physical Education is held both on- and off-campus, and includes activities such as: rowing and/or sailing, boat-building, outdoor adventures, rock climbing, ice skating, and on-campus games such as Ultimate Frisbee, soccer, and basketball.

TECHNOLOGY

Middle Schoolers each receive an iPad for classroom use/research and have the opportunity to use educational applications, such as eReader, iMovie, Pages, Notability, Numbers, etc., along with SMART Board technology. Through their capstone project—producing the school’s yearbook—students practically apply desktop publishing and graphic design skills.

THEATER ARTS

The music and drama curricula are integrated with, and complementary to, the Humanities curriculum. All academic studies culminate in the yearly dramatic production. Music is also cross-curricular and every student has the opportunity to learn about instruments and to read music. Historical musicology and music theory are also taught over the two-year cycle.

Recently, the middle school students culminated a 10-week guitar course with a beautiful performance of [House of the Rising Sun](#).

ART

Students engage in in-depth studies of art history, artists, and cultural arts. Museum visits as well as visits to artist studios are a large part of the middle school art experience. Students create large installations and environmental sculptures on and off campus. A variety of learning experiences are explored and integrated into the curriculum through various art forms including photography and mixed media.

FOREIGN LANGUAGE

Children study either French or Spanish language along with the culture of those countries.

Additional Experiences

A curriculum-enhancing trip each year.

Required on-campus service, e.g., pizza-lunch assistance, support during school functions.

Use of local resources and partnerships, such as:

- Historic O'Neil Farm – socializing new calves in spring
- Duxbury Bay Maritime School – sailing
- Woods Hole – marine ecology program
- Career explorations: 30-hour internships in 7th & 8th grade, which include
- a one-week internship experience off campus
- Curriculum-based outings and guest speakers
- Coursework leading to licensure for motor boat operation

Students work collaboratively to run a small business in order to gain real-life experience in the business world (<http://tinyurl.com/bfarmbooks>).