



2016-2017

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COURSE CATALOG



## Our Mission

The New Community School empowers bright, talented students who are challenged by dyslexia and related learning differences. The innovative and research-based college preparatory curriculum uses a customized educational approach to build skills in language and math and to foster academic and personal strengths – igniting the passions and gifts of unique minds.

## Our Vision

The New Community School transforms lives by creating an educational environment that celebrates the strengths of dyslexia and related learning differences. The School empowers minds that think differently and inspires tomorrow's leaders and innovators.

## Our Guiding Principles

- We believe students with dyslexia and related learning differences have the potential to succeed through increased skills, self-esteem and the identification and development of their strengths and passions.
- We believe the blend of research-based academic drill and a rigorous college preparatory curriculum is the foundation of our unique program.
- We believe in educating the whole student. Our student life programs help maximize potential for success and promote positive citizenship.
- We believe The New Community School has a responsibility to determine ways in which it can serve the educational public, including the encouragement of professional growth and educational research through the sharing of proven approaches and instructional strategies for working with the students we serve.
- We believe this program should be available to all students who are appropriate candidates.

## Our Goals

- To enhance our financial strength to ensure long-term stability
- To integrate technology into all areas of learning
- To expand and enhance academic and student life programs
- To improve and enhance our campus, facilities and operations
- To build awareness and engagement among our internal and external communities

## Curriculum Overview

The students who come to The New Community School enter with specific language skill deficits. These impact their ability to acquire knowledge and their ability to demonstrate what they know. Standardized testing often reveals deficits in reading, spelling, and math computation skills. Deficits in written expression, organizational skills, and study skills are more difficult to quantify, but are no less crucial for academic success at the secondary level. All of the academic departments have built-in structures and strategies that are designed not only to help our students to compensate for their skill deficits but to help them develop reliable and effective organizational and study techniques. As students develop the skills needed to succeed in future educational settings, supports and structures are gradually withdrawn and students are expected to exercise greater independence.

A primary focus in the middle school is the remediation of reading, handwriting, spelling, composition, math, and study skills. Lack of these skills can be the basis for declining self-concept and motivation in school settings. When fully developed these are the skills that can create independence in traditional academic settings. At The New Community School many middle school students spend three periods daily in classes focusing on skill remediation. These include English, math, and language fundamentals, which is direct instruction in reading, spelling, and handwriting. Class placement in math and language fundamentals is based upon diagnostic skill testing; class size typically ranges from three to six students. The English curriculum combines the study of literature with instruction in basic composition skills. Classes average six to eight students.

Middle school students also have one daily period each of social studies and science. These classes are composed of an average of six to eight students. The curriculum is designed to make sense of the world around us and establish dependable patterns of exploration and information gathering in each discipline. While students are acquiring basic skills they cannot be expected to demonstrate academic skills they do not yet possess. Accordingly, the school makes appropriate accommodations, allowing untimed tests, oral testing, reading of assignments, etc. in order to give a student full access to the academic curriculum and to ensure successful, productive experiences. Students also begin to learn how to use assistive technology both to access information and to demonstrate their understanding. For this reason all middle school students are asked to bring an iPad to school. The program emphasizes “hands-on” learning experiences and is designed to allow all students to participate fully, regardless of the level of their language skills.

A hallmark of our middle school program is the division-wide emphasis on study skills. Students develop a toolkit of study strategies that they can use. Teachers work with students as they implement the strategies and determine which ones are most effective for them.

Middle school students receive regular instruction in health, physical education, and practical and fine arts. These classes meet most days. The practical and fine arts program includes technology instruction. They are then asked to use their technology skills for their academic coursework. The middle school practical and fine arts offerings also include courses in art, photography, robotics, multimedia design, sewing, and drama.

A typical upper school student’s schedule includes daily classes in English, math, history, science, and language fundamentals. Academic and Language Fundamentals classes carry one unit of credit per year. Upper school students also take classes in health and physical education and practical and fine arts. These carry .4 credits per semester.

Each full credit academic course meets for approximately 140 clock hours and requires a significant amount of out of class preparation. The average class size in upper school academic classes is six to eight students. Elective and physical education classes may be somewhat larger. Language Fundamentals classes in the upper school typically have two to four students. Upper school students are asked to bring a Macintosh computer to class each day.

A thirty-minute non-credit study hall (Extra Help) is provided for all students each day. During the Extra Help period students may see teachers for help, begin assignments due the next day, or complete tests. Middle school students and some upper school students have the option of an additional study hall during the school day, in place of one of their classes.

A supervised after school study hall is provided in both the middle and upper schools. Students who come to class without homework due that day are required to report to study hall to complete their assignments. Many students also have an additional study hall during the school day or choose to attend the after school study hall on a voluntary basis. In rare instances where a pattern of failure to complete work emerges, a student may be assigned to after school study hall on a regular basis in order to prepare for the next day's classes and thus break the cycle. Failure to report to an assigned study hall is treated as a disciplinary matter. Members of the faculty rotate responsibility for supervising the study halls.

All academic departments employ similar organizational structures and study skills strategies to help students develop these necessary skills. Teachers of all academic classes distribute weekly assignment sheets so that students know what their assignments are and can plan their study time. Each assignment sheet is also posted on the school's Portals website, so that students who have misplaced a sheet can obtain their assignments. A system of color-coded notebooks and folders keeps materials for each subject separate. Each subject's notebook does have its own organizational system, since the disciplines do not always lend themselves to identical organizational patterns.

Teachers at the lower grade levels never lecture, and even at the upper levels lectures are rare. Depending on the course and grade level, notes may be printed off the Portals, copied in class, or distributed as part of a class activity. Students receive study guides prior to tests; a full-period in-class review session precedes each test. Students whose reading and/or writing skill deficits are severe may have special testing, which may include the services of a reader or a scribe, in order to ensure that skill deficits do not interfere with fair evaluation of mastery of course content. Many students type test responses. In grades 8-12 academic courses have comprehensive semester exams; a one-week review period precedes semester exams. Seniors who have a "B" or better average for the second semester and who have not exceeded the 10% absence limit for the spring semester are eligible to exempt from the June exam.

These techniques are designed to assure that each student has the appropriate materials needed to study and that he or she learns and practices effective study strategies. As students become more proficient they are encouraged to assume greater responsibility for organizing their study activities in order to prepare them for less structured educational settings.

The curriculum at The New Community School has evolved over time as a result of both formal and informal evaluative procedures. Students complete course evaluation forms in each of their classes once a year. These offer them the opportunity to share their perceptions of the class and of the instructional techniques used, to tell the teacher which topics and activities they most/least enjoyed, and to identify the most important thing they feel they have learned. Teachers evaluate each of their courses in June on a one-page form that becomes the final section of the course objectives for the class. This offers them the opportunity to share their perceptions of what worked/did not work, how the course might be modified in the future, and to offer suggestions for new materials and activities. These are helpful to teachers in planning their classes in the fall and are also extremely helpful to department heads and the Director of Studies, as they consider major changes in the curriculum. Major changes in a course or new course offerings, are usually developed by a team that includes the Director of Studies, the department head, and the faculty member who suggested the change. Much of the work for these changes occurs during the late spring and summer. More sweeping changes that involve several courses offered by a department are usually the result of an ongoing process that includes all members of a department.

## Technology Vision Statement

At The New Community School, technology is a series of carefully selected tools that support the existing objectives of the school's curriculum. Technology allows teachers to embed the development of creative, collaborative, communicative, and critical thinking skills within the context of the curriculum. Digital citizenship is itself a learning objective reinforced through constant interaction with technology.

Technology is a tool that provides added value to teaching and learning. Technology enriches the materials, methods, and assessments our teachers use to inspire young minds, making learning more interactive and engaging. Technology also allows for a more individualized educational experience for each learner.

Furthermore, The New Community School addresses the specific language-related learning differences of its students by selecting technological tools that help students communicate ideas effectively and access materials and information that would be otherwise inaccessible. Technology levels the playing field in communication and helps students overcome the barriers they face in learning and content production. The New Community School provides direct instruction in these technologies and encourages students to see technology, including assistive technology, as a lifelong learning and communication tool.

In order to sustain these assistive and instructional technology goals, The New Community School is committed to providing supported, managed hardware and software resources. The School employs sufficient support staff to ensure reliable connectivity and accessibility for students, teachers, and administrative staff, and to provide technology integration support for teachers.

In order to maximize the value technology adds to teaching and learning, professional development at The New Community School promotes and enables successful technology integration. Every teacher is constantly growing in their technological expertise through school-endorsed professional development. Through constant learning and sharing, the faculty at The New Community School is knowledgeable about new technologies, including assistive technology, even as the technology landscape constantly changes.

*This statement was adopted by the faculty Technology Study Group during the 2013-14 school year.*

## Grades and Assessment

At The New Community School, grades reflect mastery of the course objectives. Courses are designed to be intellectually stimulating and challenging with the appropriate skill support. Individual courses are described in the Catalog of Courses and outlined in detail in the Curriculum Guide each year. A grade reflects a student's performance in a course and shows the degree of success in meeting the objective at hand. Generally, grades do not reflect difficulties with spelling and writing mechanics; however, in English classes students may be penalized for mechanical errors, if the particular error involves something the students have been taught and are now expected to apply.

Teachers strive to assess students in ways that fairly reflect their true mastery of the published objectives for the course. Students, parents, and other educational institutions rely on our grades to help them evaluate a student's readiness for transfer or post-high school instruction. Teachers work with students and parents to place grades in an appropriate context. Periodic narrative reports and conferences provide additional, more specific insight into each student's progress, including an account of the accommodations necessary for the student to achieve at the level reflected in the numerical grade. They help students identify ways to improve their performance and help students and parents recognize when a lower than desired grade may accurately reflect a student's best effort. Grades are reported four times a year, at the middle and end of each semester, and posted on the school's Portal site frequently. Numerical grades are given for all courses except electives, LF classes, and many Middle School classes.

The following grading scale is used:

- A = 95 - 100
- B = 88 - 94
- C = 81 - 87
- D = 75 - 80
- F = Below 75

Although assessment practices may differ slightly among departments and across grade levels, all teachers share certain beliefs. A brief description of letter grades as interpreted by our teachers is as follows:

**A**

Denotes excellence. Work that is of "A" quality goes beyond basic requirements of the assignment. It is exceptionally accurate and detailed, and displays a depth of understanding of the content.

**B**

Reflects work that is better than average. It reflects a solid understanding of the assignment. "B" quality work is accurate and may have flashes of excellence.

**C**

Work that receives a "C" is good, average quality work. It displays a basic understanding of the assignment. It meets the requirements but may lack some details or supporting information. Work that is of "C" quality is generally accurate, although it may include small inaccuracies. "C" work may reflect understanding on a fairly concrete level, but may not display a more in-depth grasp of the content.

**D**

Indicates work below the average level of mastery and understanding for students in a college preparatory program at a particular grade level. Although there may be some understanding of the content, performance of "D" quality may reflect significant inaccuracies or omissions.

**F**

Failing work is work that does not meet the basic requirements and demonstrates that the student does not understand key portions of the content, even at a fairly concrete level.

Grade point average (GPA) is cumulative beginning with ninth grade. The grade point average is the average of semester grades in academic classes only (typically, English, math, history and social studies, science, and foreign language in other schools). It is calculated by the Director of Studies and is used only as required in communications with other schools. It includes courses taken at other schools, high school level courses (i.e. Algebra I) taken in middle school, as well as courses taken here. A failed course is included in a student's GPA. However, if a student repeats a course only the higher of the two grades is counted. Because most colleges seem to prefer a GPA that is expressed on a four-point scale we translate our numerical grades to a four-point scale. The conversion scale used is as follows:

95-100 = 4.0	86-87 = 2.7	77-78 = 1.3
93-94 = 3.7	84-85 = 2.3	75-76 = 1.0
91-92 = 3.3	81-83 = 2.0	Below 75 = 0.0
88-90 = 3.0	79-80 = 1.7	

Many courses are graded on a Pass/Fail/Honors scale. A grade of Pass OR Honors reflects a specific level of mastery of a clearly-defined list of course objectives and/or skills. In Middle School Pass/Honors/Repeat math courses, if a student does not meet the criteria for a grade of Pass, his/her grade for the course will be recorded as Repeat and the student will repeat the course the following year, unless the student is entering ninth grade.

## **Honor Roll**

The Honor Roll at the end of each grading period recognizes students who achieve all of the following: no grade below a B (88) in any of the four academic subjects (English, math, history, and science); a grade of 88 or better in health and physical education; and a grade of “Pass” or “Honors” in both Language Fundamentals and classes in practical and fine arts. A student who otherwise meets these criteria but receives a grade of “Incomplete” in any class may subsequently be recognized once the incomplete is removed.

Final Academic Honors at the end of the school year reflects year-end grades of “B” or better in all four academic classes and in health and physical education, a year-end grade of “Pass” or “Honors” in Language Fundamentals, and semester grades of “Pass” or “Honors” for all practical and fine arts classes taken in that academic year.



## Program Requirements

### Diploma Requirements

Requirements for an academic diploma at The New Community School are as follows:

English	4 credits
Mathematics	3 credits, to include both Algebra I & either Geometry or Algebra II*
History & Social Studies	3 units, to include at least 1 unit each of World History/Geography, Government, and American History
Laboratory Science	3 credits, to include both Biology and Chemistry
Practical & Fine Arts	1 credit
Electives	8 credits **
Language Fundamentals	2 credits***
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>24 units*</b>

\* Modifications of these specific course requirements may be made by the Head of the School. These modifications may impact a student's college options.

\*\*Typically these include Health and Physical Education as well as additional credits in Math, History, Science, Language Fundamentals, and Practical and Fine Arts.

\*\*\*In most instances students take LF each year they are enrolled at TNCS.

In addition to the academic diploma requirements The New Community School requires several courses specific to certain grade levels. Beginning in the 7th grade, students are required to take a keyboarding class each year until they demonstrate that they have achieved minimum competency in keyboarding. All students in the high school who have not acquired these skills will continue to take a keyboarding class as one of their electives each year. All students must also pass the Computer Applications class, typically taken either in middle school or in 9th or 10th grade, unless they can demonstrate that they already have mastered the skills taught in that class. All juniors are required to take Junior Seminar, which is a multi-disciplinary course dedicated to the preparation for college. Seniors must take and pass the Senior Seminar, which includes a required Community Service component, a job shadowing requirement, and a Senior Speech.

Students in grades 9 and 10 are required to be enrolled in Health and Physical Education classes for both years and will receive academic credit based upon the number of hours of instruction for those classes. Students who are unable to complete a class because of illness or other temporary condition will need to make up missed instruction. They may do so in a variety of ways, including summer school and enrollment in Health and Physical Education in the upper grades. Students who are unable to complete the required Physical Education classes because of **permanent** physical limitations may be granted a waiver of this graduation requirement upon the recommendation of the school nurse, the chair of the Health and Wellness Department, and the Head of School. In most instances every effort will be made to modify class requirements to allow the student to participate to the fullest extent possible.

Research and our experience support the importance of regular physical activity for adolescents. For this reason, students in grades 11 and 12, unless physically unable to do so (as supported by a doctor's note), will be expected to engage in regular physical activity for at least half the year. Opportunities to do so include but are not limited to: participation in varsity athletics at TNCS, participation in individual or team sports or other organized physical activity outside of TNCS, and enrollment in physical education class at TNCS. Students who wish to use participation outside of TNCS will supply verification of their participation in a timely manner.

Juniors and seniors will be expected to submit a written proposal for their athletic/physical activity plan **prior** to the opening of the school year in order to permit school officials to plan appropriately. Once a plan has been submitted and approved it becomes the student's responsibility to communicate any proposed changes to the school. All plans require the approval of a committee composed of the chair of Health and Wellness, Director of Studies, and the Head of School.

Diploma requirements at The New Community School meet or exceed Virginia State standard diploma requirements, and with the exception of foreign language, meet or exceed the units required for entrance to most colleges. Courses in foreign language are not offered, because the introduction of a second set of language patterns is often counter-productive for students who have not yet mastered the patterns of their own language. Both the English and history departments provide students with many opportunities to become more aware of other cultures and heritages. In addition, language remediation often includes the study of Latin roots, prefixes, and suffixes, as well as the influence of other languages on the English language. Our research has shown that because The New Community School does not offer foreign language in our program, our students' college options are not typically hindered due to lack of foreign language credits. Where appropriate, students can pursue foreign language studies through customized options with approval from the Head of School. Many colleges which require foreign language will consider waiving that requirement for otherwise well-prepared students with documented learning disabilities. Typical graduates of The New Community School exceed the units in math, history, and science required for college entrance.

Diplomas are awarded once each year in June. Seniors who fail to meet diploma requirements by graduation day may, at the discretion of the Head of the School, participate in the graduation ceremony. Typically, this will be in instances when it is anticipated that they will be able to complete their requirements by July 1. Should they complete their required work by July 1, they will receive their diploma at that time. A student who completes diploma requirements after July 1 would receive a diploma the following June and would be included on the roll of alumni as a member of the class for the year in which the diploma was awarded. Once a student has completed diploma requirements the school will confirm that fact in writing for colleges or employers. Only seniors who are enrolled at the school for the entire senior year may participate in the graduation ceremony. Senior Seminar is a senior course; a student who is not enrolled for the senior year will not be expected to take the Senior Seminar class.

Upper school students carry a full course load each year (typically 6.6 credits) and progress towards the graduation requirement of 24 credits. Occasionally students carry slightly reduced course loads but are still able to make adequate progress towards graduation. Typically, if a student carries a reduced course load each year they will either need to take summer courses or extend their high school career to a fifth year. Students are classified according to the following standard:

- In order to be classified as a sophomore a student must have at least 4.8 credits
- In order to be classified as a junior a student must have at least 10.8 credits
- In order to be classified as a senior a student must have at least 17.5 credits

Credits earned at The New Community School are accepted for transfer by both public and independent schools. The New Community School is accredited by the Virginia Association of Independent Schools (VAIS), is a member of the Southern Association of Independent Schools (SAIS), National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS) and is licensed by the Commonwealth of Virginia.

## **Post-Graduation Planning**

During the upper high school years (grades 10-12) the school works with students and their families to help make post-graduation plans. Annual meetings for parents of sophomores, juniors, and seniors provide them with information about the college search process and the programs that have been effective for our graduates. The school participates in an annual College Fair organized by twelve independent schools in the Richmond area. Around one hundred fifty colleges send representatives to this evening program. Information on financial aid and financial planning is also available at this event.

Sophomores have a diagnostic administration of the PSAT during the spring semester. Scores are unofficial. Juniors take the PSAT each October and take the SAT at least once. Seniors may take the SAT during any of the national testing periods. The school administers College Board tests five times a year following the guidelines established by the Services for Students with Disabilities program, which allows students with documented learning disabilities accommodations such as extended time, use of an audio version of the test, provision of a reader, and/or use of a computer to record written responses. Juniors take the Junior Seminar as one of their electives during either the fall or spring semester. This course includes preparation for the Reading, Writing, and Math subtests of the SAT. Additionally, students investigate college and career options and basic concepts of personal finance. Students and their parents are encouraged to schedule preliminary college planning conferences with the college counselor during the spring of the junior year. During the senior year, students and parents should schedule at least one conference with the college counselor. Students frequently work with faculty members to prepare their college applications.

While most (85-90%) graduates go on to college or other post-secondary instruction, some graduates choose to enter the work force directly from high school. While the school does not provide specific vocational training, we do work with non-college bound seniors to identify career interests, personal strengths, and ways to obtain information about their options.

## National Honor Society

In July 2005 the TNCS Chapter of The National Honor Society received its first charter from NHS. The object of the chapter is to create an enthusiasm for scholarship, to stimulate a desire to render service, to promote worthy leadership, and to encourage the development of character in students at TNCS.

The criteria for membership are: status as a junior or senior, attendance at TNCS for at least one semester, a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher, involvement in at least two current extra-curricular activities, and exemplary character and citizenship. During the fourth quarter each year sophomores and juniors who meet the grade point average requirement as described below will be invited to apply and describe their extra-curricular activities. Qualifying activities include clubs, athletic teams, and other significant activities at school, such as the Student Advisory Board, as well as community-based activities like Scouts, youth groups, choir, or outside classes. For purposes of NHS membership, “current” is defined as during the current school year. A member of the chapter shall be expected to serve as an example to others by his or her attitude, cooperative spirit, and reliability. Serious disciplinary actions or frequent after school study hall assignments would be examples of failing to set a good example.

Members are selected by a five person Faculty Council, named by the Head of the School. The Faculty Council meets during the fourth quarter to discuss academically eligible candidates to determine their eligibility as to service, character, and leadership. All sophomores with a cumulative GPA of 3.15 or higher and juniors whose cumulative GPA is at least 3.0 are eligible for consideration. Other members of the faculty may also be consulted as part of this discussion. The announcement of new members is made at the annual Awards Assembly in May. New members are inducted at an evening induction ceremony early in the fall.

Members are expected to maintain a grade point average of at least 3.0 or better and to continue their record of character, service, and leadership. Members who fail to do so may be given a warning or, in the case of flagrant violations, may be dismissed. In lieu of dismissal, the Faculty Council may impose disciplinary sanctions upon a member as deemed appropriate. Violators of the School’s rules of conduct or the Honor Code will receive notification in the form of a written warning, except that in the case of flagrant violations of school rules, expulsion, or violation of the law a warning does not have to be given. If a warning is given then a conference may be requested by either party (Faculty Council or student/parent.) If a member continues in violation, the member may be dismissed. Decisions of the Faculty Council may be appealed to the Head of the School.

The chapter meets weekly and conducts one or more service projects each year. All chapter members are expected to participate. These projects have the following characteristics: they fulfill a need within the school or community, have the support of the school administration and the faculty, are appropriate and educationally defensible, and are well-planned, organized, and executed. A faculty advisor, who is appointed by the Head of the School, works with the members of the chapter.

## ENGLISH

### English 5-6

**Mrs. Carmichael**

English 5/6 focuses on building fundamental skills in composition and literary analysis. The literature studied includes the novels *The Mighty Miss Malone* and *Love That Dog*, selections from Scholastic's *Weekly Reader: News Edition*, and a variety of other short stories and informational text sources. In composition, students are introduced to basic parts of speech and sentence structures. Then, they apply these basic structures to longer writing tasks. They learn a multi-step writing process and use it repeatedly to develop their creative potential through varied writing experiences and cross-curricular activities and projects. Instructional strategies include structured note-taking, daily practice, and regular use of manipulatives to reinforce and review content. Small group discourse, role-playing, kinesthetic learning activities and audio-visual resources stimulate and enhance learning.

In alternate years the literature studied includes *Island of the Blue Dolphins*

### English 7

**Ms. Witmeyer**

English 7 focuses on fundamental skills in composition and literary analysis. The literature studied includes: the novel *Boy of the Painted Cave*, and a variety of short stories, informational texts, and other selected genres of literature. In composition, students engage in multi-sensory instruction beginning with basic parts of speech combined with sentence building and generation techniques. Students will learn how to create simple, compound, and complex sentence structures. Then, students apply these basic structures to longer writing tasks and are introduced to writing the academic paragraph. They learn a multi-step writing process and use it repeatedly to develop their creative potential through varied writing experiences and cross-curricular activities and projects. Instructional strategies include structured note-taking, daily practice, and regular use of manipulatives to reinforce and review content. Small group discourse, role-playing, kinesthetic learning activities and audio-visual resources stimulate and enhance learning.

### English 8

**Ms. Futterman**

English 8 focuses on building skills in composition and literary analysis in preparation for high school as well as remediating basic skills. The literature curriculum focuses on themes relating to coming of age. Literary works studied are: *The Outsiders*, *The Lightning Thief*, *Stargirl*, and selected poetry. In composition, students review basic parts of speech, as well as simple, compound, and complex sentence structures, with emphasis on increasingly complex sentences. They apply these basic structures to longer writing tasks and are introduced to academic writing forms required for high school. They learn a multi-step writing process and use it repeatedly to craft and revise paragraphs and essays as well as to develop their creative potential. Composition work develops student awareness of the elements of writing: content, expression and word choice, format, and mechanics. Instructional strategies include structured note-taking, daily practice, and regular use of manipulatives to reinforce and review content. Small group discourse, role-playing, kinesthetic learning activities and audio-visual resources stimulate and enhance learning.

### English 9

**Ms. Goode**

The ninth grade English curriculum focuses on structures of academic composition and analysis of literature. Literature study includes units on short stories, two novels, *To Kill a Mockingbird* and *Lord of the Flies*, and a play, *Romeo and Juliet*. Students study standard literary vocabulary to analyze and evaluate these texts. The composition component includes the review of basic parts of speech and sentence structures and emphasizes the use of increasingly complex sentences in writing. Students use a multi-step writing process as well as a model for task analysis and self-evaluation of written expression. Students develop their academic writing skills with a research paper. Instructional strategies include structured note-taking, daily review and practice, and regular use of manipulatives to reinforce concepts. Small group discourse, role-playing, kinesthetic learning activities and audio-visual resources stimulate and enhance learning.

**English 10****Ms. Butterworth**

Tenth grade English first provides a review of students' composition skills and skills of literary analysis and then builds greater sophistication. The literature curriculum focuses on understanding characters' actions and motivations and on analyzing the varying authors' use of characterization techniques, settings, and universal themes. The students begin by studying short stories and poetry before moving on to novels, drama, and a memoir (*Persepolis*, *A Raisin in the Sun*, *Things Fall Apart*, and *The Glass Castle*). This material is taught using a multisensory approach, with a combination of a variety of enrichment activities, structure note-taking, discussions, role playing, and peer interaction/collaboration. In composition, students review basic parts of speech, simple, compound, and complex sentence structures, and emphasize increasingly complex sentences. They also build in more effective use of the writing process as well as task analysis and self-evaluation, and then move toward competent composition of the multi-paragraph essay. Instructional strategies include structured note-taking, daily practice, and regular use of manipulatives to reinforce and review content. Small group discourse, role-playing, kinesthetic learning activities and audio-visual resources stimulate and enhance learning.

**English 11-12****Ms. Orsini**

The eleventh and twelfth grade English curriculum develops students' compositions proficiency, critical thinking, literary analysis, library and research skills, and oral communication in a seminar setting. In the literature curriculum, students read non-fiction, novels, and modern dramas. Students also employ a discipline-specific vocabulary to analyze and evaluate these texts. In composition, students follow a highly structured writing process to complete all lengthy assignments as well as a research paper. Additionally, they become competent in analysis and self-evaluation of writing tasks. Students will learn to transfer their composition skills and understanding into the more rigorous demands they are likely to encounter as they pursue their education beyond high school. Throughout the year, students demonstrate increased independence in writing, research, and studying. Students reading below grade level are encouraged to use audio versions of the literature as they follow along in their texts.

This year's literature selections include *The Catcher in the Rye*, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, *The Death of a Salesman*, *The Great Gatsby*, and *Walden*.

**English 11-2 Composition, Analysis, and Organization****Mr. Humphrey**

English 11-2 Composition and Analysis is a skills-oriented course for upper school students who continue to need to rebuild their foundation of written expression and literary interpretation skills. Students review the writing process and basic parts of speech, leading to accurate sentence construction. Then, when these skills are well established, the emphasis switches to strategies for writing composition forms consistent with the upper grades of high school and college preparation – paragraphs, essays, and a lengthy research paper, as well as business writing. The literature, chosen to be accessible, provides opportunities for literary analysis, leading to increased literary comprehension and analytical thinking. Literature selections include selected short stories, *The Light in the Forest*, and *Our Town*.

## MATHEMATICS

### **Basic Math**

**Mr. Morgan**

Middle school math students in the Basic Concepts course develop concepts and operations with whole numbers. Basic facts will be drilled to an automatic level using a systematic, multisensory approach. All processes for operations are related to the concept of the numbers and estimation will be used to determine if the answer is reasonable. Students are encouraged to use the checking procedures to ensure the accuracy of their work. There is an emphasis on applying these operations to practical problems. Other topics will include money, time, and an introduction to basic fractions. Teaching techniques include a daily warm up of written computational practice or review of math facts, supervised note-taking, written practice of new topics, and nightly homework. Games, measurement tools, and cooperative group activities complement daily lessons and drill.

### **Fractions, Decimals, and Percents**

**Ms. Harley and Mr. Morgan**

Middle school math students in the Fractions and Decimals course develop concepts and operations with rational numbers. All processes for operations are related to the concept of rational numbers, and students are encouraged to use checking procedures to ensure the accuracy of their work. There is an emphasis on applying these operations to practical problems. Teaching techniques include a daily warm-up of written computational practice, supervised note taking, written practice of new topics, and nightly homework. Games, measurement tools, and cooperative group activities complement daily lessons.

### **Basic Geometry and Measurement**

**Ms. Smith**

The Basic Geometry and Measurement curriculum offers an opportunity to work on measurement, analysis, and Geometry concepts while continuing to review and improve basic computational skills involving whole and rational numbers. The ultimate goal of the course is to be able to apply whole and rational number concepts and operations in these areas while simultaneously strengthening mastery of basic computational skills. Instructional methods will include written practice, drill and reinforcement of basic facts, and written homework, balanced with kinesthetic, manipulative, and creative learning activities, working together toward conceptual reinforcement.

### **Middle School Pre-Algebra**

**Ms. Hale**

The Pre-Algebra curriculum offers an opportunity to work on algebraic concepts while continuing to review and improve basic computational skills. The ultimate goal of the course is to be able to solve equations with rational number solutions. As the students demonstrate improved computational skills with whole numbers, decimals, fractions, percents, and integers, they use those numbers in equation solving and in solving word problems using equations. Each student takes notes in a reference notebook and then practices the process or skill in class and on nightly homework. There is an emphasis on the benefits of self-checking in algebra and resulting self-corrections.

### **High School Pre-Algebra**

**Mr. Keevil and Mr. Rothschild**

The Pre-Algebra curriculum offers an opportunity to work on algebraic concepts while continuing to review and improve basic computational skills. While numerous concepts are taught, the ultimate goal of the course is to be able to solve equations with rational number solutions. As the students demonstrate improved computational skills with whole numbers, decimals, fractions, percents, and integers, they use those numbers in equation solving and when completing word problems using equations. Each student takes notes in a reference notebook, and then practices the process or skill in class and on homework assignments. There is an emphasis on the benefits and results of self-checking in algebra.

### **Algebra I**

**Ms. Leshner, Ms. Savarese, and Ms. Hale**

Algebra I is offered to students who have completed Pre-Algebra with a grade of “C” or better, have passed the year-end exam, and have demonstrated computational and application skill levels sufficient for the study of algebra. Students use manipulative materials to develop understanding of the abstract concepts of algebra.

The concrete manipulatives are used to develop understanding of vocabulary, operations with integers, equation solving techniques and operations with polynomials. The students discover how patterns and relationships are incorporated into the real number system. Throughout the year problem solving skills are taught and practiced. Teaching techniques include a daily warm-up for computational practice, lecture and note-taking, manipulative and written practice of new topics, and one-to-one instruction when needed. Students are also introduced to the graphing calculator.

### **Algebra II**

**Ms. Leshner**

Algebra II is offered to those students who have completed Algebra I with a grade of “C” or better and who have passed the year-end exam. First semester topics include solving and graphing linear equations and inequalities, determining equations of lines, matrices, and polynomials. In each area, students review and continue to develop basic concepts of Algebra I. In the second semester, topics become more abstract and theoretical. They include factoring polynomials, rational expressions, radicals, the quadratic formula, and parabolas. Throughout the year, students develop and practice problem solving skills. Teaching techniques include daily warm-up of computational practice, discussion and note-taking, written practice of new topics, and one-to-one instruction when needed. Students will also use the graphing calculator.

### **Geometry**

**Ms. Savarese**

Geometry is usually offered to students who have successfully completed Algebra I. The focus is on understanding all concepts of Geometry and on improving critical thinking skills. After basic concepts and vocabulary are introduced, students use inductive reasoning to develop theorems about parallel lines, congruent triangles, quadrilaterals, and similar figures. Deductive reasoning skills are developed through solving practical problems and through exercises which require drawing conclusions based only on clues given. There is more opportunity in this course than in traditional Geometry courses for students to work with concrete models and drawings and prove to themselves that certain concepts and theorems are true. These skills are developed further through problems requiring informal proof-writing. Throughout the year, students analyze figures and use their understanding of that type of figure to apply appropriate formulas. This requires a thorough understanding of the vocabulary of Geometry.

### **Advanced Math Applications**

**Not offered in 2016-17**

*Advanced Math Applications* is offered to students who have successfully completed Algebra I, Algebra II, and Geometry. The main emphasis of this problem-based, inquiry-oriented course is the application of mathematical principles and concepts. Students will apply new and expanded mathematical topics while exploring issues in disciplines including science, personal finance, information technology, and politics. Topics include thorough studies of statistics, functions, probability, three-dimensional geometry, and set theory. The instruction in this course constantly calls on previous math knowledge and often leads to observations of patterns and relationships in math that the students have not noticed before. Summative assessments will require students to apply their learning by analyzing, evaluating, and creating solutions to real-world problems while providing sound mathematical support for their assertions.

### **Algebra III/Trigonometry**

**Mr. Rothschild**

Algebra III/Trigonometry is offered to students who have successfully completed Algebra I, Algebra II, and Geometry. The topics are chosen to prepare students for the types of math courses that we anticipate they may take at the college level. Topics include a thorough study of functions, series and sequences, and a review of solving systems of equations by algebraic methods. Matrices are used to solve systems with three variables. Students will learn to recognize and develop arithmetic and geometric sequences and series. Students spend much of second semester studying trigonometry topics, including basic trig relationships, graphing trig functions, applications and identities. The instruction in this course constantly calls on the previous math knowledge and often leads to observations of patterns and relationships in math that the students have not noticed before. These observations are enhanced and expanded through the use of graphing calculators and other technology.



**Statistics****(Not offered in 2016-17)**

Statistics and Probability is offered to students who have successfully completed Algebra I, Algebra II, and Geometry. The topics chosen will allow students to understand and enjoy statistics. As they grow in their understanding of statistics, they will enjoy learning a subject that has many real world applications from such fields as natural science, business, economics, medicine, social science, archaeology, and consumer interest. Students will learn how to organize data in several different ways. They will study averages and variation, as well as regression and correlation. They will develop an understanding of probability theory, the Binomial Distribution, and the Normal Distribution. The students will study how information about samples relates to information about populations, and by using sample estimates, use sample data to draw conclusions about populations. Then the students will test their conclusions using various statistical formulas.

## HISTORY AND SOCIAL STUDIES

### **Social Studies 5-6**

**Ms. Oliver**

In fifth and sixth grade Social Studies students develop skills that are essential in middle and high school history classes. These include learning to use notebooks, flash cards, and study guides to prepare for tests; learning to read maps; developing basic research skills; and developing the ability to understand cause-effect relationships. They develop skills while learning about the history, geography, and culture of our country. In **Early American History** students learn about the earliest inhabitants of our country and European exploration and settlement. They then explore some of the major conflict points in the early history of our country: slavery and the slave trade, the decision to seek and fight for independence, and the settlement of the west. They participate in a variety of engaging activities that help them to appreciate the struggles and achievements of early Americans and have the opportunity to visit some of the places where our history occurred. Students will also research the election process in preparation of both a classroom and a all-school debate on candidates and their positions on chosen issues.

In alternate years fifth and sixth grade students take **American Geography and Social Sciences**. They learn about the various social sciences to appreciate how each – Geography, Economics, History, and Political Science – helps us to make sense of the world around us. Much of the year is spent in a focused study of the geography of our country, as students learn about the ways that the physical environment has influenced the way Americans live, both now and in the past. Hands-on activities help them to appreciate the challenges and opportunities Americans have faced in each of the five regions of our country.

### **World History 7**

**Mr. Wise**

The seventh grade world history course examines early humans and the rise of civilization in the ancient Middle East and considers these issues: How do we learn about the past? How did early man develop? What is a civilization? What causes civilizations to rise and fall? How are ideas transferred from one civilization to another? How can we compare civilizations that are different from one another? What impact does religion have on society? How can ancient civilizations still impact our lives today? Students will also conduct research and debate the issues of the 2016 Presidential Election. In this class, students polish and extend skills developed in earlier social studies classes in order to prepare for the challenge of high school classes. The course utilizes a variety of multi-sensory instructional techniques and a wide range of materials. Field trips, outside speakers, and short and long research projects enhance the classroom experience.

### **World History 8**

**Ms. Noble**

The eighth grade world history course examines the rise of civilization in ancient China, Greece and Rome and considers these issues: How do we learn about the past? How did early civilizations develop? What is a civilization? What causes civilizations to rise and fall? How are ideas transferred from one civilization to another? How can we compare civilizations that are different from one another? What impact does religion have on society? How can ancient civilizations still impact our lives today? In this class, students polish skills developed in earlier social studies classes in order to prepare for the challenge of high school classes. The eighth grade curriculum is designed to provide a bridge between the middle school classes and the greater demands of the high school curriculum. This fall we will research the election process in preparation of both a classroom and an all-school debate on candidates and their positions on chosen issues. The course utilizes a variety of multi-sensory instructional techniques and a wide range of materials. Field trips, outside speakers, shorter research projects, and participation in National History Day enhance the classroom experience.

### **World History 9**

**Ms. Latta**

In ninth grade World History students continue many of the themes from the eighth grade course, as they learn about world civilizations from the fall of Rome through the era of The Scientific Revolution and The Enlightenment in Europe. They examine the impact of geography, resources, government, religion, and ideas on human societies. During the fall semester they learn about Medieval Europe, the rise of Islam, Imperial China, and Medieval Japan. In the spring they examine the European Renaissance, the Protestant

Reformation, and the explorations that once again connected Europe with civilizations in other parts of the world. They conclude with a study of the Scientific Revolution and the Enlightenment in Europe and how these changes and discoveries led to the French Revolutions. The course utilizes a variety of multi-sensory instructional techniques and a wide range of materials. Students complete at least one research project about a topic or person studied this year.

### **American History**

**Mr. Carmichael**

American History is a year-long survey course in American history from Jamestown through the dawn of the twentieth century. Students view American History in terms of our pursuit of five key ideals articulated in the Declaration of Independence: equality, rights, liberty, opportunity, and democracy. During the fall semester students complete a short research project; during the spring they write a longer formal research paper. Learning strategies include a variety of engaging, multisensory classroom activities. The primary objective of the course is to acquaint students with the major issues and events in American history so that they may develop their own well-reasoned and well-informed opinions and exercise capably their responsibilities as citizens. During presidential election years students also spend some time studying campaign issues and the positions the candidates have taken on those issues.

### **The United States in the Modern World**

**Ms. Morris**

This course provides students with the opportunity to explore the history of the first half of the twentieth century. It employs a somewhat non-traditional approach in its recognition of the extent to which American History and World History are interrelated during this time period. It also provides students with the opportunity to develop several key skills necessary for success in college-level courses: note taking, essay writing, and research. Students complete two major research projects. During the fall semester they work in groups to prepare National History Day projects. These projects allow groups of students to research a topic related to the annual theme and then present the results of that research in either a documentary video or an original play. This year's theme is: *Taking a Stand in History*. Students are encouraged to make wide use of primary source materials in preparing their projects. During the spring semester they complete a formal research paper on a course-related topic. At least once a week class sessions are conducted lecture-style, in order to prepare students for the type of instruction they will encounter in college. Class activities also include group work and a variety of multi-sensory activities. Major topics include: World War I, the Russian Revolution, the 1920s, the Great Depression in the U.S. and elsewhere, Hitler's rise to power, and World War II in the U.S. and around the globe.

### **Government and Politics in the Modern World**

**Mr. Carmichael**

This capstone course focuses on government, politics, and modern history. Students explore how our political system works and why it works the way it does. They explore both the workings of the branches of government and the role individual citizens play in the political process. They investigate the major events of the past sixty years, both in our own country and elsewhere and consider the relevance of the five ideals of rights, equality, liberty, opportunity, and democracy for Americans today. In preparation for future education they refine academic skills, including taking notes from lecture and writing a formal research paper. Most importantly, they prepare themselves to take on the rights and responsibilities of citizens in a democracy. Class activities emphasize multi-sensory, interactive strategies and rely heavily on student involvement and initiative.

### **Advanced Placement U.S. History**

**Ms. Morris**

A.P. United States History is a college-level course offered to students who have successfully completed our introductory American history courses and who have been recommended by the Language Fundamentals department. It serves as an advanced L.F. course, designed for students who no longer require traditional language remediation but who would benefit from continuing to develop their reading and writing skills through the medium of a challenging academic course. The course follows the Curriculum Framework developed by the College Board. However, because enrollment is predicated on the assumption that students have already studied American History, the focus in class is on historical thinking skills rather than on

acquisition of facts. Students use a college level textbook, which does, however, provide them with a deeper and richer body of knowledge than they have encountered in previous courses. Students will have the opportunity to take the AP U.S. History exam in May and may acquire college credits if their score is high enough. The course deals with a fairly broad time period (pre-1492 through the present) and is organized around seven themes, each of which is best approached by considering American history across time periods: American Identity; America in the World; Geography and Environment; Migration and Settlement; Politics and Power; Culture and Society; and Economy (work, exchange/trade, and technology). Class activities focus primarily upon reading, writing, and discussion rather than on note taking or information acquisition. Many will also focus on theme exploration across broad periods of time, rather than on a more chronological approach. Because students in this course typically are also enrolled in a regular History course, this class does not include a major research project or the teaching of research skills. Unlike traditional L.F. classes, this course does include tests, a fall semester exam, and grades, much like a traditional academic course.

## SCIENCE

Middle School Science focuses on how science relates to daily living. Students learn science concepts through hands-on experiences such as model building, field observations, and laboratory activities. They learn to approach science problems by using the scientific method and carrying out scientific investigations in the lab. Students are also taught how to communicate results of experiments through charts and visual presentations. The science process skills of classification, measurement, observation, prediction and inference are integrated throughout the course. The emphasis is placed not on the memorization of facts but on a thorough understanding of important concepts. Teamwork and communication is essential as students develop skills to design and analyze in-class experiments. Students are taught how to set up and maintain a notebook that is useful to them on a daily basis for homework and in preparation for tests.

### Science 5-6

**Ms. Taylor**

In 2016-17 students in grades 5 and 6 will study the characteristics of living organisms and what distinguishes simple cellular organisms from higher-level organisms. Students will learn about the concept of classification and the criteria for life. This specific study of living organisms will be linked through a general study of how organisms have changed over time throughout the vast history of life on Earth. The focus will be on Earth's early history and the characteristics of unicellular life.

In 2017-18 students in grades 5 and 6 will study the characteristics of living organisms and what distinguishes simple cellular organisms from higher-level organisms. Students will learn about the concept of classification and the criteria for life. This specific study of living organisms will be linked through a general study of how organisms have changed over time throughout the vast history of life on Earth. The focus will be on multicellular life and ecosystems.

### Science 7

**Mr. Foulger**

In 2016-17 students in grade 7 will explore the concept of energy. Through the study of the Law of Conservation of Energy, students will be exposed to basic physical science concepts such as energy transformations and atomic structure. They will discover how our society currently uses energy, what electricity is, how electricity is generated, and possible alternative energy resources of the future. Conservation of resources will be a focus as students are asked to analyze the advantages and disadvantages of today's energy use practices. Consequently, the interaction and effect of humans on the environment will be examined through a study of the greenhouse effect and pollution.

### Science 8: Science Issues in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

**Mr. Lancaster**

8<sup>th</sup> grade science students need to become increasingly aware of science related issues that will have an impact on their adult lives. Two essential questions are: "How do the physical and living world interact to sustain the earth's ecosystem?" and "What is the human impact on the balance of the ecosystem?" The course will also examine space exploration and the quest for finding another planet that might support life. Students will also continue their development in the understanding and application of the scientific method. As students examine issues such as global climate change and energy usage they will have the opportunity to develop communication and critical thinking skills. They will be asked to form, support, and share opinions about such issues as global climate change and the impact of energy usage on the natural environment. The goal is to have students better informed about the issues that will surround them and a greater willingness to accept personal responsibility for their individual impact on the earth's ecosystem.

### Physical Science

**Ms. Hoyle**

Physical Science is a practical study of the relationship between matter and energy. An emphasis on problem-solving and experimental design gives students the opportunity to be actively involved with each topic of study as they learn how scientists work. Application of physical laws and chemical processes become current and meaningful as such topics as automobile safety and technological advances are studied. Fundamental physical science principles are introduced through student involvement rather than by rote memorization.

Chemical and physical properties of matter, electricity, magnetism, sound, light, technology and the laws of motion are taught focusing on the interests and needs of today's students. Information concerning high interest areas such as lasers, radio, television, computers, and stereo equipment is included. Complex ideas are presented simply, developed logically, and reinforced with concrete, hands-on activities. Students use their experience in observation, in data gathering, and in studying cause and effect relationships to interpret happenings in their environment.

### **Chemistry**

**Mr. Stannard**

Chemistry is the study of how substances act and interact in the presence of various forms of energy, such as heat or electricity. The purpose of the Chemical Concepts course is to help students realize the role of chemistry in their personal lives; use chemical principles to think more intelligently about current issues that involve science and technology (thus developing decision-making skills); and develop a lifelong awareness of the potential and limitations of science and technology. Each unit in the course centers on a technological issue now confronting our society. The topic serves as a foundation for studying the chemistry needed to understand and analyze it. The course begins with a study of water in the fictional community of Riverwood and continues with an explanation of chemical resources, petroleum, and air. The setting for each is the school, town, region, or world community. Each unit culminates in an activity designed to help students apply their chemical knowledge in investigating a problem, proposing solutions to the problem, and analyzing the effects of their solutions, including any new problems that may result.

### **Biology**

**Ms. Hoyle**

Biology introduces students to increasing levels of complexity in living systems. The course covers the interdependence of organ systems in an organism. Students learn the place of humans in relation to other living things. Specific areas of emphasis include genetics, metabolism, reproduction, evolution, microbiology, and the study of vertebrates and invertebrates. The variety of topics demonstrates the large body of information within the discipline. Much of the information covered in lectures is supplemented with hands-on activities to strengthen understanding of the concepts presented. Lab participation is an integral part of this course.

### **Environmental Biology**

**Mr. Stannard**

Environmental Biology provides a more in-depth examination of important concepts introduced in the first year of biology such as the nature of microbial life, which is examined using aseptic technique in the laboratory. Students explore ecosystems and nutrient cycling in the classroom and through collaborative field studies. The controversies over genetically modified organisms and other important biological issues are explored. Interactions with several local scientists provide a real-life analysis of biology-related careers. In addition, students learn a risk/benefit decision-making strategy for assessing the impacts of scientific decisions on the health of ecosystems. Scientific inquiry and the limitations associated with scientific evidence are also a focus of the course.

### **Science, Technology, and Society**

**(Not offered in 2016-17)**

Students in Science, Technology, and Society learn a risk/benefit decision-making strategy for assessing technology and its effect on society. They learn to ask pertinent questions, obtain evidence, and use it as a basis for decision-making. The nature of scientific inquiry and the limitations associated with scientific evidence are also a focus of the course. An investigation of a current concern is the focus of each unit studied. For example, while studying the atom and radiation the class may gather information about a proposed power plant or the latest treatment for cancer. Other topics of study are the gene, learning, ecology, and the expanding universe. In the fall, students choose either to conduct a scientific investigation to submit to the Virginia Junior Academy of Science statewide competition or to write a research paper on a current issue related to science and society. Political and moral issues in science are discussed. Emphasis is on presenting a challenging, interesting, and relevant course that encourages sound scientific reasoning while studying some basic science concepts at a deeper level than in earlier courses.

## **LANGUAGE REMEDIATION**

Students at The New Community School take a daily period of language remediation in a course called Language Fundamentals. The goal of this class is to improve each student's specific language learning deficits. Instruction occurs in classes of two to four students so specific needs in reading, spelling, handwriting, written expression, organization, and study skills can be addressed. The tailoring of instruction takes into account the student's learning style, strengths, and difficulties. Language remediation is carefully sequenced and structured and emphasizes a multi-sensory approach to learning patterns in the English language.

Remediation begins at the level of the student's need. Basic reading instruction emphasizes sound-symbol relationships, syllabication, word structure analysis, vocabulary, signal words, and phrasing. Instruction in reading comprehension includes understanding sentence and paragraph structure, main and supporting ideas, detecting and recalling significant detail, distinguishing between direct and implied statements, drawing logical conclusions, drawing inferences, and anticipating the author's thought and conclusion.

Spelling instruction encourages an analytical, problem-solving approach to spelling difficulties rather than dependence on rote memory. Instruction includes the carefully sequenced discovery and recognition of the predictable patterns in the English language. Instruction in legible cursive handwriting and good spatial organization is given when appropriate, and proofreading and self-correcting techniques are built into daily instruction.

The goal of language remediation is to raise language skills to a level commensurate with intellectual potential. The language remediation teacher and academic teachers support the transfer of newly learned skills to the student's classwork as these skills become automatic. Reports of progress in language remediation are made to the parents periodically throughout the year. Yearly testing allows a formal assessment of progress. L.F. teachers meet with parents every fall and spring to review their child's Individualized Instruction Plan and annual testing.

## HEALTH AND WELLNESS

### **Middle School Physical Education**

**Mr. Brown and Mr. Whitlock**

Students in this course will acquire the knowledge and skills for movement that provide the foundation for enjoyment and continued social development through physical activity. Students will learn specialized skills and concepts that lead to confidence and competency in a variety of physical activities. Physical activity will include lessons from team sports, individual sports, and aerobic sports. Students could experience activity levels of moderate to high intensity. There will be regular fitness assessments administered according to national guidelines.

### **Middle School Health**

**Ms. Chambers, Mr. Creasey, Mr. Gobble, Mr. Humphrey**

This course will acquire help students to advance their academic performance by promoting, practicing and coordinating general health and wellness principles. This program will help to establish health behaviors in students designed to last their lifetime. The curriculum will include lessons in physical fitness, health and wellness, decision-making, self esteem/body image, nutrition, mental health/stress, your body systems, growth and development, diseases and disorders, drugs and alcohol, and personal safety.

### **High School Physical Education**

**Mr. Brown and Mr. Whitlock**

Students in this course will acquire the knowledge and skills for movement that provide the foundation for enjoyment and continued social development through physical activity. Students will learn specialized skills and concepts that lead to confidence and competency in a variety of physical activities. Physical activity will include lessons from team sports, individual sports, and aerobic sports. Students could experience activity levels of moderate to high intensity. There will be regular fitness assessments administered according to national guidelines.

### **Advanced Physical Education**

**Mr. Gobble**

This course is a continuation of the Be an 11! program presented by BiggerFasterStronger, Inc. Students will work to achieve personal greatness by setting goals, tracking progress and coaching each other to reach new heights. Students will learn specialized skills and concepts that lead to confidence and competency in a variety of strength training movements. Physical activity will include strength training, plyometrics and mobility practice.

### **Health 9-10**

**Mr. Brown**

*Substance Abuse and Sexuality* is offered to ninth and tenth grade students in alternate years. In this nine-week long course, students study body control systems. Initially, they explore the functioning of the human senses as well as the function of the brain and nervous systems. The relationship between brain physiology and dyslexia is also examined to help students better understand their unique learning strengths and weaknesses. The endocrine system and its role in sexual development is studied and discussed. In the later portion of the course, the serious, detrimental effects of tobacco, alcohol, drugs and sexually transmitted diseases on these body control systems are discussed. Information is presented in a multisensory manner with emphasis on the visual modality, using such methods as charts, models, videos, and drawings. Community resources and guest speakers broaden our students' awareness of the community's role in health services. Students are evaluated on in-class participation, notebook, performance on oral projects/ reports, tests and special projects.



## PRACTICAL AND FINE ARTS ELECTIVES

Practical and Fine Arts elective classes at The New Community School expose students to activities and skills of a non-academic nature. These courses offer opportunities to learn new skills, develop artistic talent, or pursue a well-defined interest. Most often these courses are heavily weighted with “hands-on” productive activities and emphasize both individual growth and positive group interactions. Each course has goals that address subject knowledge, social and recreational opportunities, community involvement, and leadership. Students are evaluated using a Pass/Fail/Honors grade system. The courses are scheduled on a semester basis. Students usually select at least one of their elective courses. Usually students receive either their first or second choice. Students in grades 5-7 take the *iPad in Education* course during their first semester at TNCS; most often they take a course in *Keyboarding and Word Processing* in the 7<sup>th</sup> grade. Successful completion of *Computer Applications* is required for graduation; 8<sup>th</sup> grade students take this course in the fall. New upper school students usually take it in their first semester at TNCS unless they have already taken a similar course. All juniors take *Junior Seminar* for a semester. Seniors take *Senior Seminar* for a full year.

### Middle School Exploratory Classes

#### Art, iPad Photography, and Robotics

Ms. Webb, Mr. Creasey, and Ms. Harley

The Electives Sampler course gives fifth and sixth grade students an opportunity to sample some of TNCS’s most popular electives by choosing two out of the three modules. In these 9-week versions of Art, iPad Photography, and Introductory Robotics, students will learn fundamentals that will prepare them for a full-length version in the future. In Art, students will develop visual communication skills. Students will understand and utilize the essential elements of art and principles of design. Student will create artworks that are inspired by famous artists and art movements. In Introductory Robotics, students who have an interest in future participation on the TNCS Robotics team, Sabernetics, will design and build a Lego EV-3 robot and learn the basics of programming it as well as learn about the Lego FIRST Tournament. In iPad Photography, students will learn the basics of photographic composition using their iPad cameras and related apps.

### Fine Arts Classes

#### Art 5-8

Ms. Webb

Art 5/8 focuses on the creation of art works that explore personal identity and other cultures of the world. This course presents students with a wide range of art skills and media. The projects taught are designed to allow students personal expression, art skill development and knowledge about art of other cultures. Students will explore drawing, painting with acrylics, watercolor, collage methods, sculptures, and hand-building clay methods. Students will create art projects inspired by other cultures throughout the globe. Students will then examine how artists’ identities are reflected in their art and learn to interpret works of art for themselves. Students will use symbolism to create works of art that represent their growing understanding of who they are.

#### Survey of Three-Dimensional Art

Ms. Webb

In Survey of Three-Dimensional Art students will learn to make educated decisions regarding form in order to create sculptural works of art. The survey will utilize a wide variety of sculptural materials. Exercises will be assigned in various media including; paper/cardboard, wire, fiber arts, found-object altering and other assorted tactile media. Students will also have the opportunity to work in ceramics, including both wheel throwing and hand-building techniques. This course will teach the executive functioning skills necessary to plan and sequence a successful art project.

### **Level I: Drawing from Observation**

**Ms. Webb**

A traditional media experience will be offered in the general discipline of drawing. Students will develop their skill to see in order to build upon their ability to draw. Students will primarily learn to use graphite and charcoal and create art works from direct observation. Students will maintain a sketchbook that will continually track their growth with exercises and assignments specifically designed to engage right brain thinking. This course will also teach the executive functioning skills necessary to plan and sequence a successful art project.

### **Level II: Drawing from Observation with Color**

**Ms. Webb**

Students will continue to develop their skills to see in order to build upon their ability to draw in Level 2: Drawing from Observation with Color. Students will gain new knowledge in color theory and technical use of colored pencils and oil sticks along with the continuing to build skills with graphite and charcoal art materials. Students will maintain a sketchbook that will continually track their growth with exercises and assignments in challenging subject matter such as figure, perspective and still life. Students will also continue to build upon the executive functioning skills necessary to plan and sequence a successful art project.

### **Level II: Painting**

**Ms. Webb**

After students develop their ability to see in order to draw in prerequisite *Level 1: Drawing* students will then further their understanding of two-dimensional art in *Level 2: Painting*. Working in acrylic, oil and watercolor paints, students will learn proper use and technique. Color theory, aesthetic theory and famous painters will be discussed in order to guide students towards a more independent and purposeful level of educated creation. Students will complete works from direct observation, imagination and photographic reproduction. This course will continue to develop the executive functioning skills and built a more independent art creator.

### **Middle School Photography**

**Mr. Creasey**

Students will be introduced to the fundamentals of photographic composition. They will examine the evolution of the camera and gain a true appreciation for foundational photography methods such as pinhole cameras and blue prints without negatives. Students will also be introduced to a number of composition methods used in the production of quality digital photographs. Using their iPad device, students will develop an understanding of digital technology and learn to use photo-editing apps. Students will come away with an understanding of both the compositional and technical aspects of picture taking that will prepare them for the Basic Photography course offered to upper school students.

### **Basic Photography**

**Mr. Creasey**

In the basic photography course students learn to take black and white photographs using a 35 mm camera. They will look at the history of photography and the evolution of the camera. Students will be introduced to a number of professional photographers along with their photographs. Students will come away with an understanding of the power and importance of photography throughout history. They learn about light theory by using a pinhole camera. They will develop a basic understanding of both the compositional aspects of picture taking and the technical aspects. They will also learn how to develop black and white paper and film safely in a darkroom setting.

### **Advanced Photography**

**Mr. Creasey**

Advanced Photography is a course that teaches students to go beyond basic photography techniques. The course focuses on advanced techniques with a 35 mm camera or other formats of interest. This course will require students to have taken the basic photography class which provides an understanding of the compositional and technical aspects required to create a proper, artistic photo.

In Advanced Photography, students will be given assignments that will teach more complex elements of design, both with and without a camera. Students will put their existing photography skills to use, including developing black and white paper and film in a darkroom. Advanced photography is a project based course

where students learn to design, propose, complete, and evaluate multiple week long assignments. Students will be encouraged to submit completed projects for school or public display.

### **Digital Photography**

**Ms. Cindy Smith and Mr. Creasey**

This is a course for students who are curious about photography and desire a basic introduction to digital methods. Students will be introduced to the fundamentals of photographic composition. They will examine the history of photography and the evolution of the camera. Students will also be introduced to a number of composition methods used in the production of quality digital photographs. Students will develop an understanding of digital technology and become proficient in digital camera use. Students will come away with an understanding of both the compositional and technical aspects of the digital photograph. Students must supply their own camera (no tablet or phone cameras).

### **Drama 6-8**

**Ms. Noble and Mr. Keevil**

In this introductory course of drama, students are introduced to an overview of the elements of the theater. Basic acting and stage terms are incorporated through a series of activities and simple presentations. The student will identify responsibilities involved in a variety of dramatic presentations. Students will learn the skills necessary to produce a large-scale performance.

### **Drama 9-12**

**Mr. Keevil and Mr. Stannard**

The drama elective is an introduction to theatre with an emphasis on basic acting skills as well as offering an opportunity to work behind the "curtain" in coordinating costumes, prompting, property management, set design, program, poster and ticket design and controlling lighting and sound equipment. The objective of this course is to give the student a well-rounded theatre education. The student will learn to analyze a script to determine all that is necessary to create a full length play production.

### **Introduction to Guitar**

**Mr. Roy**

Introduction to Guitar is a beginner's course of fundamental guitar instruction for a group of six or fewer students with little or no previous experience with the instrument. The course is a hands-on class that allows each student to have daily access to an acoustic guitar in good, playable condition. Students receive a substantial amount of individual instruction in playing notes, scales, and chords and in reading guitar tablature and strum charts. Students can progress at their own rates and focus on types of music that appeal to them. The emphasis is on contemporary guitar music, not classical guitar. In addition, students will learn to play in groups and have opportunities to try other instruments such as keyboard, percussion, banjo, and bass guitar.

## Technology Courses

### **iPad in Education**

**Ms. Carmichael, Ms. Oliver, and Ms. Witmeyer**

iPad Basics uses a teacher-directed approach to teach the basic function of the iPad and school required apps. Students in grades 5-7 are required to complete this class. Students will become proficient in the use of the iPad to complete school assignments. Students will review concepts related to online safety and ethical use of digital resources.

### **Keyboarding**

**Ms. Oliver and Ms. Witmeyer**

Keyboarding/Word Processing uses a teacher-directed approach to teach touch typing. All students, beginning in their middle school years, are required to take keyboarding until a minimum competency is met. Students set individual goals to improve their keyboarding speed and accuracy as well as to improve their word processing skills. Students move through the objectives as quickly as they are able. Students are encouraged to use their newly acquired word processing skills outside of class as soon as possible to complete one academic homework assignment each day on the computer.

### **Computer Applications**

**Ms. Hale, Ms. Harley, Ms. Lesher, and Ms. Smith**

In Computer Applications, students learn to use word processing functions, spreadsheets, charts, graphics, and presentation software. The students are exposed to brainstorming software that helps them organize their thoughts for written expression. Internet research techniques are taught as well as computer ethics, etiquette, and internet safety. The course integrates review and practice of touch typing in order to increase each student's entering speed and accuracy. Students are encouraged to practice and use their skills outside of class by typing at least one academic homework assignment each night. Computer Applications is open to students who have passed Keyboarding/Word Processing or demonstrated a working knowledge of basic computer skills.

### **Multimedia Design 7-8**

**Ms. Smith and Mr. Wise**

Multimedia is for students who want to create and display digital projects. Students will learn to use multimedia software to edit digital photos. Videos will be enhanced with visual effects and audio clips. Student artwork, pictures, and videos will be displayed on the internet while students explore and use ethical principles, etiquette, and safety. Multimedia Design is recommended for students who demonstrate a high level of interest in creating projects on a computer.

### **Programming**

**Mr. Wise**

Programming will introduce students to the basics of computer programming. Students will learn basic programming vocabulary, concepts, and syntax in a variety of programming languages, including JavaScript, Python, and PHP. Students will also learn about basic computer systems and web development. This course does not require any background in programming, just an interest in learning about computers and how we can make them work for us.

### **Robotics 6-8**

**Mr. Wise**

The Robotics elective course provides students opportunities to develop skills in engineering, research, innovation, communication, and collaboration with the ultimate aim of competing in the First Lego League's Annual Challenge. Students work as a team to build, program, and operate a robot; research the challenge project, identify a specific problem, develop an innovative solution, and create a presentation of it; and develop the characteristics necessary to meet FLL's core values based on accountability, responsibility, initiative, sportsmanship, curiosity, and communication.

### **Advanced Technology Projects**

**Ms. DelMonte**

Advanced Technology Projects is for students who want to plan, create, and display digital projects. Students will learn to plan and execute digital projects that utilize a variety of tools and software.

The teacher will serve as a facilitator and provide support for students as they execute projects. Student products will be displayed digitally. This course is open to students who have passed Computer Applications and demonstrate a high level of interest in computers.

### **Yearbook**

**Ms. Orsini**

The Yearbook elective is a course designed to instruct students in the fundamentals of graphic design and the processes associated with print production with the ultimate aim of producing *Dimensions*, the TNCS yearbook. Students take and edit photographs; write headlines, body copy, and captions; learn the elements of eye-catching design, and fit text and photos into layouts, using desktop publishing technology.

## **Additional Practical Arts Courses**

### **American Sign Language 1**

**Mrs. Carmichael**

The American Sign Language elective focuses on basic fundamental skills of the language, Deaf culture, and awareness. Expressive and receptive skills in American Sign Language will begin at the foundational level of fingerspelling, conversational vocabulary, and syntactical structures such as classifiers, appropriate expression, and directionality. Students will learn these skills through a variety of methods including direct instruction, hands-on activities, and digital media. Apart from learning the language at a beginner level, students will explore topics related to Deaf culture and the contributions of Deaf Americans throughout history. Students will demonstrate their knowledge of course content through sign performance, projects, and discussion. By experiencing the culturally Deaf population through study, the students will also identify ways in which people overcome differences and challenges, learn to succeed, and accept their own identities.

### **American Sign Language 2**

**Mrs. Carmichael**

The second level of the American Sign Language elective continues to focus on basic fundamental skills of the language, Deaf culture, and awareness. Expressive and receptive skills in American Sign Language will extend beyond the foundational level of fingerspelling and conversational vocabulary to focus more on syntactical structures such as classifiers, appropriate expression, and directionality. Students will learn these skills through a variety of methods including direct instruction, hands-on activities, digital media, and weekly voice-off classes. Apart from sharpening ASL skills, students will study topics related to Deaf culture and explore the Deaf community around them. Students will demonstrate their knowledge of course content through sign performance, projects, discussion and interaction with the Deaf community. By experiencing the culturally Deaf population through study, the students will also identify ways in which people overcome differences and challenges, learn to succeed, and accept their own identities.

### **Digging into Science 5-8**

**Ms. Taylor**

Science is all around us, you just may not have noticed. In this course, students will explore the many ways science affects our daily lives. Students will learn about the different types of sciences and the variety of available careers in science. Through hands-on experiments and group projects, and field trips, students will explore and investigate scientific principles and engage their curiosity about the world around them. Students will be encouraged to bring their ideas for experiments they would like to conduct or concepts they would like to learn more about.

### **Outdoor Life Skills**

**Mr. Foulger**

The outdoor life skills elective will explore various topics related to outdoor recreation. Students will learn how to prepare for outdoor adventures and will practice setting up campsites. They will learn how to care for the land they are utilizing for recreation and investigate basic survival skills. As a class, the students will plan and participate in an outdoor trip. Safety, preparation, and group dynamics will be the underlying themes in planning activities.

**Sewing and Crafts 5-8****Ms. Hale**

Sewing and crafts is a course of fundamental sewing and craft instruction for a group of six or fewer students with little or no experience with sewing. This is a hands-on class that requires students to complete several sewing and crafts projects throughout the semester. Basic hand-stitching techniques are taught first and then students learn how to cross-stitch. Students will also receive instruction in basic techniques for using a pattern and machine stitching. Various crafts projects will be completed as time allows.

**Strategy Games 5-8****Mr. Morgan**

The Strategy Games and Logic elective course explores classic and contemporary board, card and dice games. Researching the origin of classic games will take students on a historical journey across cultures and timelines. They will examine rules for each game and develop effective strategies to achieve the game's objective. Building a safe environment for competitive and cooperative play, they will define good sportsmanship and fair play. Using the art of play will enhance student's cognitive skills of decision-making, problem solving, and reasoning. Students will cull from gameplay experiences to collaborate and create a simple board game of their own.

**Woodworking: Basic Handcraft Skills 9-12****Mr. Humphrey**

Woodworking: Basic Handcraft Skills is a hands-on course in which students learn the physical properties of wood and how those properties inform the design of a practical and attractive product/project. They learn to make simple drawings from which to build individual projects. The focus is on shop safety, the safe and correct use of hand tools, and techniques of basic joinery (up to three basic wood joints). Students develop a foundation for a lifelong interest in wood craftsmanship, and explore creative expression in wood. There is a minimal use of power machinery in this course, as many of the techniques of fine craftsmanship depend on competent knowledge and use of traditional handsaws, planes, chisels, and other hand tools. Students in the course for the second or third time will have some directly taught and supervised experience with a few essential woodworking machines.

**Junior Seminar****Ms. Latta, Ms. Savarese, and Ms. Leshner**

The Junior Seminar is a semester-long required course for juniors. Centered around the theme of *Preparing for College*, it focuses on SAT Preparation and exploration of college and career options. Students work on strategies to improve their performance on the SAT. Students practice questions in the Math and Evidence-based Reading and Writing subtests to become familiar with the directions, format, and types of questions. They also work with the college counselor to explore college programs and services available to students with learning differences and are introduced to basic concepts in Personal Finance.

**Senior Seminar****Ms. Latta and Mr. Rothschild**

The Senior Seminar is a year-long required course for seniors. Centered on the theme of *Preparing for Adulthood*, this course incorporates study of a number of topics relevant to TNCS seniors: career-planning, ethical and global issues, public speaking, professionalism, entrepreneurship/global citizenship, dyslexia's impact on the individual (the adult dyslexic), and understanding the brain. At the start of the fall semester, students will investigate career options and establish a relationship with a professional in a chosen field. Students will also learn about issues related to being a dyslexic adult and new concepts about dyslexia. During the remainder of the fall, students will begin study of civicism and ethics as they investigate global issues to be the subject of spring research papers in English. Moral dilemmas are presented through case studies and viewed through ethical frameworks for decision-making. As a capstone, students will research and lead a class discussion their chosen global issue. In the spring, students will develop professional and public speaking skills and participate in a job application simulation. Throughout the year, students will plan and carry out thirty hours of community service at an approved, non-profit agency of their own choosing.

## **Independent Study**

## **High School Faculty**

An Independent Study elective course is offered to motivated, well-organized high school students with a demonstrated record of success with independent projects. Students pursue well-structured academic projects of personal interest and work with faculty coaches who have an expertise or interest in that area. Examples of possible projects include: National History Day entries, entries for the Virginia Junior Academy of Sciences competition, preparation of a portfolio for art school admission, online courses, and independent writing projects. Students may elect to pursue an Independent Study for a semester or a full year.