



The New Community School

empowering bright minds who think & learn differently

2018-2019 Course Catalog

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 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As students develop the skills needed to succeed in future educational settings, supports and structures are gradually withdrawn and students are expected to exercise greater independence.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: untimed tests, oral testing, reading support, etc. in order to provide full access to the academic curriculum and ensure successful, productive experiences. Students also begin to learn how to use assistive technology both to access information and to demonstrate their understanding. Therefore, all middle school students are asked to bring an iPad (grades 5-7) or a Mac computer (grade 8) 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. The middle school practical and fine arts offerings also include courses in art, photography, robotics, multimedia design, woodworking, music, and drama, as well as several multi-disciplinary offerings.

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 a wide variety of practical and fine arts. These carry .5 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 approximately 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 Mac 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 binders 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 of 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 or use their device's speech to text function to dictate responses. In grades 8-12 academic courses have comprehensive semester exams or projects; 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 be 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 chairs and the school's Leadership Team 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 members of the Leadership Team, the department chair, 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, when necessary, 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 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.

Periodic narrative reports and conferences provide insight into each student's progress, including an account of the accommodations necessary for the student to achieve at his or her current level of performance.

Student progress reports are issued four times a year, at the end of each quarter, and interim information is posted on the school's Portals site frequently.

Letter grades are given for all courses in grades 8-12 except electives and LF classes. Classes in grades 5-7 are assessed on a standards-based system using a 0-4 proficiency scale. Math courses are graded using the letter scale beginning with Pre-Algebra.

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

A/4 = Excelling in the standards assessed
B/3 = Proficient in the standards assessed
C/2 = Developing mastery of the standards assessed
D/1 = Emerging ability in the standards assessed
F/0 = No demonstrated progress in the standards assessed

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 and 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 letter grades to a four-point scale. The conversion scale used is as follows:

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|---------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|-------------|
| A = 4.0 - 3.5 | B ⁺ = 3.4 - 3.2 | C ⁺ = 2.6 - 2.3 | D ⁺ = 1.6 - 1.3 | F = 0.6 - 0 |
| | B = 3.1 - 2.7 | C = 2.2 - 1.7 | D = 1.2 - 0.7 | |

HONOR ROLL

The Honor Roll at the end of each grading period recognizes students who achieve no grade below a B in any subject and a grade of “Pass” or “Honors” in Language Fundamentals. 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 classes and a year-end grade of “Pass” or “Honors” in Language Fundamentals.

PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

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

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|------------------------------|---|
| 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 ** |
| <u>LANGUAGE FUNDAMENTALS</u> | <u>2 credits***</u> |
| TOTAL | 24 units* |

* 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.

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 after school, summer classes, and enrollment in Health and Physical Education in the upper grades, at the discretion of the Chair of the Health and Wellness Department. 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.

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. Students must take part in the June Commencement ceremony in order to be awarded a diploma, unless permission is given by the Head of School.

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) and Southern Association of Independent Schools (SAIS), is a member of National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS) and is licensed by the Commonwealth of Virginia.

ONLINE CLASSES AND BLENDED LEARNING

In recent years we have been able to expand the academic options available to some TNCS students through the use of online courses. A number of students have taken a summer online Physical Education course, either to make up credits missed due to injury or to open up space on their schedule for additional elective options or a study hall. TNCS students have taken these courses through Carone Fitness, an accredited supplemental school specializing in health and fitness-related courses. Typically summer accelerated courses are eight weeks in length and carry .5 credits. A word of warning: an online P.E. course is a serious P.E. course and not designed for the faint of heart. The students get a workout! However, they have more flexibility in their choice of activities, and students who are already involved in athletic pursuits like gymnastics, swimming, or dance may find that they can apply these activities to meet some of the course requirements.

Summer online academic courses are largely geared towards credit recovery; they are designed to help students who *almost* passed a course learn just enough to make up the difference between failing and passing. They don't provide enough instruction to present an entire year's academic course content. Consequently, TNCS students have not taken academic courses *for credit* during the summer.

However, each year during the school year several TNCS students take online academic courses in order to study a wide variety of subjects, including Creative Writing, Anatomy & Physiology, Statistics, Psychology, and foreign language. Our students have worked with a number of online providers, although the school's preferred provider is the Virtual High School. Most studies of online K-12 education find that the successful online student is someone who is motivated, organized, independent, responsible, and a good reader. We have found that our students do best when they have a coach – a teacher or tutor who is easily accessible and can provide onsite support. This combination of online and onsite education is called Blended Learning, because it blends two different approaches. Not surprisingly, our students also do best when the course they are taking is one that genuinely interests them. Students who are taking an online course instead of a TNCS course often have a study hall during the day that can provide them with the time needed for their coursework and with a teacher who can help them.

Students and parents who are interested in exploring the possibility of future online classes should contact the Director of Upper School, who coordinates these classes, or the College & Career Counselor. TNCS reserves the right to determine which online credits it will accept and typically requires that end of semester online course exams be proctored by a TNCS faculty member.

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 a group of 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, a large block (“no bubbles”) answer sheet, and use of a computer for essay questions. In order to qualify for these accommodations students must complete the College Board’s accommodation process. We recommend that this happen during the sophomore year or during the summer prior to the junior year. The accommodation process often requires that a student secure updated intelligence testing and skill testing.

Juniors take the Junior Seminar as one of their electives during the 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.

Occasionally students opt to take the ACT in addition to the SAT. The ACT has a separate accommodation process. Students and parents are encouraged to work closely with the college counselor in order to make sure they can complete this process in time for the testing date they prefer.

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. Although 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. Several of the activities in the Senior Seminar course are particularly helpful in this regard: the job shadowing activity, development of a resume, and a series of mock job interviews.

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 infractions 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

English 5/6 focuses on building fundamental skills in composition and literary analysis. The literature studied includes the novel *The Wild Robot* by Peter Brown, 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 *The Mighty Miss Malone* by Christopher Paul Curtis and *Love That Dog* by Sharon Creech.

English 7

English 7 focuses on fundamental skills in composition and literary analysis. The literature studied includes: an autobiography *John Muir: My Life with Nature*, 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

Eighth grade English begins with a review of each student's composition skills and literary analysis skills. The literature curriculum focuses on themes relating to coming of age through our study of *Peak*, *The Outsiders*, and the *Red Kajak*. We evaluate characterization and analyze the impact of characters' actions on others and their world. We also explore the author's use of language, settings, and plot. In composition, students review basic parts of speech, as well as simple and compound sentences. Students then progress to complex sentence structure and academic paragraphs. They learn a multi-step writing process. 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, peer collaboration, kinesthetic learning activities and audio-visual resources are used as well to enhance learning.

English 9

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 collaborative English/history research paper. Instructional strategies include structured notes, daily review and practice, and regular use of manipulatives to reinforce concepts. Small group discussion, role-playing, kinesthetic learning activities and audio-visual resources stimulate and enhance learning.

English 10

Tenth grade English first provides a review of students' composition skills and skills of literary analysis and then builds greater sophistication. The course begins with an intensive unit of grammar to review simple and compound sentences and narrative writing before focusing on new, increasingly complex sentences and academic paragraph skills. 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, color-coding and regular use of manipulatives to reinforce and review content. The tenth-grade literature is multicultural and includes poetry, a drama, a graphic novel, and a memoir. The literature curriculum focuses on analyzing the authors' use of characterization techniques, settings, and universal themes in a variety of genres. Students examine the experience of characters from different cultures through the lens of our common humanity. Small group discourse, role-playing, kinesthetic learning activities and audio-visual resources stimulate and enhance learning.

English 11

The eleventh grade English curriculum develops students' composition proficiency, critical thinking, literary analysis, research skills, and oral communication in a seminar setting. In the literature curriculum, students read non-fiction, poetry, novels, and modern dramas: selections from *Walden*; selected poetry by Emily Dickinson, Walt Whitman, Langston Hughes, and others; *The Great Gatsby*; *Death of a Salesman*; and *Catcher in the Rye*. Students are encouraged to use audio versions of the literature as they follow along in their texts. Students also employ a discipline-specific vocabulary to analyze and evaluate these texts. In composition, students follow a structured writing process to complete all lengthy assignments as well as a research paper. Additionally, they practice self-evaluation of writing tasks. Throughout the year, students demonstrate increased independence in writing, research, and studying. Students will be introduced to the more rigorous demands they are likely to encounter as they pursue their education beyond high school.

English 11-12

The eleventh/twelfth grade English curriculum develops students' composition proficiency, critical thinking, literary analysis, research skills, and oral communication in a seminar setting. In the literature curriculum, students read non-fiction, poetry, novels, and short stories: *Fahrenheit 451*; selected poetry; selected short stories; nonfiction and articles from *Upfront*; *Animal Farm*; and *Of Mice and Men*. Students are encouraged to use audio versions of the literature as they follow along in their texts. Students also employ a discipline-specific vocabulary to analyze and evaluate these texts. In composition, students follow a structured writing process to complete all lengthy assignments as well as a research paper. Additionally, they practice self-evaluation of writing tasks. Throughout the year, students demonstrate increased independence in writing, research and studying. Students will be introduced to the more rigorous demands they are likely to encounter as they pursue their education beyond high school.

English 12

The twelfth grade English curriculum strengthens students' composition proficiency, critical thinking, literary analysis, research skills, and oral communication in a seminar setting. In the literature curriculum, students read non-fiction, novels, and dramas: *Oedipus Rex*, *Antigone*, *Macbeth*, *Fahrenheit 451*, *Animal Farm* and selected speeches and essays. Students also employ a discipline-specific vocabulary to analyze and evaluate these texts. In composition, students develop skills preparatory for first-year college writing courses. Students develop an individually effective writing process. Major writing assignments, including the research paper, are self-directed. They refine their ability to self-evaluate their written work. Throughout the year, students practice independence in reading assigned texts and studying. Students are expected to use audio support as needed. In final preparation for college English composition classes, 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.

MATHEMATICS

Math Foundations

Middle school math students in the Math Foundations 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

Middle school math students in the Fractions, Decimals, and Percents course build upon their basic math skills to develop concepts and operations with rational numbers. Students learn how to effectively apply these mathematical operations to practical problems. Verifying mathematical solutions for accuracy and evaluating those solutions for reasonableness helps students develop higher order and critical thinking skills. Students learn to reason quantitatively and abstractly. Instructional practices include a daily warm-up of computational practice, supervised note taking, practice of new skills, and nightly homework. Games, hands-on math manipulatives, online resources, and cooperative group activities complement daily lessons and help students model mathematical concepts. Students learn to use appropriate tools strategically and strive for precision in solving problems. Students are encouraged to make sense of problems and persevere in solving them. Throughout the school year, students improve their number sense and mathematical confidence.

Basic Geometry and Measurement

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. 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 drill and reinforcement of basic facts, written practice, and homework. Concepts will be explored and reinforced through kinesthetic, manipulative, and creative learning activities.

Middle School Pre-Algebra

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 numbers. As the students demonstrate improved computational skills with whole numbers, fractions, decimals, percents, and integers, they apply these skills when solving equations and word problems. Each student completes notes for their math binder and then practices the skills in class and on nightly homework. Pre-Algebra emphasizes the benefits of checking if answers are accurate and reasonable.

High School Pre-Algebra

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 numbers. As the students demonstrate improved computational skills with whole numbers, fractions, decimals, percents, and integers, they apply these skills when solving equations and word problems. Each student completes notes for their math binder and then practices the skills in class and on nightly homework. Pre-Algebra emphasizes the benefits of checking if answers are accurate and reasonable.

Algebra I

Algebra I is offered to students who have demonstrated computational and application skill levels sufficient for the study of Algebra. The primary focus in Algebra I is instruction on graphing linear equations and problem solving techniques of various types of equations. Additional topics include operations with integers, systems of equations, operations with polynomials, and factoring. The students will 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 warm-ups 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

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, students study 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.

Geometry

Geometry provides students with the opportunity to explore and experience the concepts of Geometry. 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.

Pre-Calculus

Precalculus is offered to students who have successfully completed Algebra I, Algebra II, Geometry, and Algebra III/Trigonometry. This course prepares students for calculus by using methods emphasizing technology, real-world applications and student discovery. Topics include a thorough study of Trigonometry, functions and their graphs, applications of equations and graphs, and conic sections. 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. These observations are enhanced and expanded through the use of technology, including graphing calculators and computer applications.

Statistics

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.

AP Calculus AB

AP Calculus is offered to students who have successfully completed Algebra 1, Algebra 2, Geometry, and PreCalculus or by permission of department. This is a college-level Calculus course designed to meet the Advanced Placement curricular requirements for Calculus AB. The major topics of this course are limits, derivatives, integrals, and the Fundamental Theorem of Calculus. We will investigate and analyze course topics using equations, graphs, tables, and words. Students will be stretched to give explanations both verbally and in writing. Precise vocabulary and mathematical symbols will be an important aspect of communicating mathematically.

HISTORY AND SOCIAL STUDIES

Social Studies 5

The fifth grade social studies course broadens student awareness about the local and global communities in which they live. Students learn the fundamentals of geography and explore different cultures and public service roles. Students will explore what makes up communities - how geography, economics, and government structures play a role in our culture and our everyday lives. Students will participate in a variety of simulations, classroom projects, hands on activities, and build research and other student skills.

World History 6

The sixth grade world history course examines early humans and the rise of civilization in the ancient Middle East and India 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? The course utilizes a variety of multi-sensory instructional techniques and a wide range of materials. Field trips, outside speakers, and a long research project enhance the classroom experience.

World History 7

The seventh grade world history course examines the rise of civilization in ancient Sumer, Egypt, 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? The seventh grade curriculum is designed to provide an overview of the evolution of man from hunters and gatherers to farmers to groups that grew into city-states and eventually advanced civilizations. The course utilizes a variety of multi-sensory instructional techniques and a wide range of materials. Field trips, shorter research projects, and participation in grade level projects enhance the classroom experience.

World History 8

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. The course utilizes a variety of multi-sensory instructional techniques and a wide range of materials. Field trips, shorter research projects, and participation in National History Day enhance the classroom experience.

World History 9

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, and Imperial China. 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

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

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: *Conflict and Compromise 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

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 United States History

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 & National 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

Science 5

Fifth grade 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 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 are essential as students develop skills to design and analyze in-class experiments.

Science 6

Students in sixth grade science develop an understanding of three core ideas: Molecules to Organisms: Structures and Processes, Ecosystems: Interactions, Energy, and Dynamics, and Biological Evolution: Unity and Diversity. The performance expectations in this class blend these core ideas with scientific and engineering practices. Students continue to hone their understanding of scientific processes including creating and using models, planning and conducting investigations, analyzing and interpreting data, using mathematical and computational thinking, and constructing explanations.

Science 7

Students in 7th grade science develop an understanding of four core ideas: Matter and its Interactions, Forces and Interactions, Energy, and Energy Resources and Electricity. The performance expectations in this class blend these core ideas with scientific and engineering practices. Students continue to hone their understanding of scientific processes including creating and using models, planning and conducting investigations, analyzing and interpreting data, using mathematical and computational thinking, and constructing explanations.

Science 8: Science Issues in the 21st Century

8th 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. 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

Physical Science is a practical study of the relationship between matter and energy. Students will study real life applications of Physical Science concepts: engineering challenges, space exploration and rocket technology, Wi-Fi and fiber optics, cell phone engineering, speakers, where our electricity comes from (including nuclear power), how cars work (including the combustion engine), and the future of electric cars. Through these real-life topics, students will learn core physical science concepts: waves, light and sound, magnetism, electricity, the Laws of Motion, gravity, friction, energy transfer and conservation, and the properties of matter. These fundamental physical science principles are introduced through student involvement rather than by rote memorization. Complex ideas are presented simply, developed logically, and reinforced with concrete, hands-on activities. Students use their experience in observation, data gathering, and studying cause and effect relationships to interpret how things work in their daily lives.

Chemistry

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 Chemistry 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.

Biology

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

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.

LANGUAGE FUNDAMENTALS

Most students at the New Community School take a daily period of language remediation and instruction called Language Fundamentals (L.F.). The goal of this class is to improve each student's specific language-based learning skills, and instruction is individualized in groups of 2-4 students. The L.F. teacher uses a diagnostic and prescriptive approach to guide instruction, based on daily observation as well as knowledge of the student's cognitive strengths and weaknesses. The program aims to develop a solid foundation in basic language skills upon which more advanced competencies in reading and writing are built. As students develop automaticity and fluency in accurate word recognition, spelling, and oral reading, their program increasingly emphasizes reading comprehension and written expression.

Basic language instruction is carefully sequenced and structured and emphasizes a multi-sensory approach to learning. It is based on phonetic principles with the aim of improving the student's reading and spelling accuracy through structural word analysis. Instruction encourages an analytical, problem-solving approach to reading and spelling difficulties rather than dependence on rote memory. Daily lessons include fluency-building drill and practice. Students are taught cursive handwriting as appropriate, with emphasis on legible form, accuracy, and stamina. Direct teaching of comprehension skills focuses on developing vocabulary, understanding sentence structure, recalling details, and recognizing and summarizing main ideas.

Instruction for advanced L.F. students provides opportunities to apply learned skills, grapple with complex text and language, and acquire learning strategies for college success. Comprehension strategies include distinguishing between direct and implied statements, making inferences, drawing logical conclusions, determining the author's tone and biases, and making evaluative judgments. Writing instruction aims to develop clarity, organization, voice, and persuasive effect in students' written responses to reading. Techniques for proofreading written work are emphasized at all levels of instruction.

The goal of L.F. classes is to raise language skills to a level commensurate with the student's intellectual potential. Instruction begins at the level of the student's need and progresses as he or she demonstrates skill growth and competence. The pace of instruction is determined by informal observation and assessment as well as periodic normative testing. The L.F. teacher communicates the language goals in the Individual Instructional Plan to parents and provides quarterly updates of progress through written reports and/or conferences. In collaboration with academic teachers, the L.F. teacher supports the transfer of skills to the student's classwork, promoting academic competence and independence.

HEALTH AND WELLNESS

Middle School Physical Education

The Physical Education program at TNCS provides all students the access to standards-based instruction that promotes health literacy, and the motivation to engage in health-enhancing physical activity needed to achieve and maintain a balanced, healthy life. Middle School Physical Education places an emphasis on the key elements of cooperation, body awareness, flexibility, endurance, agility, balance, and spatial awareness. Major emphasis is placed on skill development, through a wide variety of physical activities. Students will learn to apply fundamental skills and knowledge of anatomical structures and movement principles to build movement competence and confidence. Cooperative and competitive group games are appropriate as well as outdoor pursuit, fitness activities, dance and rhythmic activities. Students will learn that social interaction becomes more complex as a peer pressure becomes increasingly pronounced. Students solve problems and learn how to make responsible decisions as they work together. Each sport or activity will provide an opportunity for the development of interpersonal relationships, social growth and centers on cooperation and healthy competition.

Middle School Health and Wellness

Directly correlated to the *National Health Education Standards*, our health and wellness curriculum continually evolves to remain relevant to the needs of our students and our community. The 9 weeks course provided every year, 5th – 8th grades, integrates developmentally appropriate topics taught in a skills-based approach. Inquiry, discussions, demonstrations, and project-based learning will enable students to demonstrate the ability to access, understand, and analyze concepts related to health promotion and disease prevention. Additionally, students will demonstrate the ability to practice, promote, and advocate for health-enhancing behaviors, and reduce health risks for personal, peer, and community health.

Upper School Physical Education

The Physical Education program at TNCS provides all students the access to standards-based instruction that promotes health literacy, and the motivation to engage in health-enhancing physical activity needed to achieve and maintain a balanced, healthy life. High School Physical Education recognizes the continuing dramatic changes in physical and social growth. Students are challenged more physically in endurance, strength, coordination, and agility. The programs and activities focus on the more traditional games of flag football, basketball, volleyball, team handball, and softball. Emphasis is placed on the understanding of rules of play, proper playing form, and game strategy. Sportsmanship, team cooperation, and leadership are also fostered in each activity. In addition, emphasis is placed on acquiring an appreciation for the mastery of each sport at various levels. The course also emphasizes stimulating exposure to other recreational and life sports, such as vita trails. Students develop a respect for healthy physical activity and recognize it as a necessary part of a healthy lifestyle.

Advanced Physical Education

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 training movements. Physical activity will include strength training, plyometrics, agility training, and mobility practice.

Upper School Health and Wellness

Directly correlated to the *National Health Education Standards*, our health and wellness curriculum continually evolves to remain relevant to the needs of our students and our community. The 9 weeks course, provided in 9th and 10th grades, integrates developmentally appropriate topics taught in a skills-based approach. Inquiry, discussions, demonstrations, and project-based learning will enable students to demonstrate the ability to access, understand, and analyze concepts related to health promotion and disease prevention. Additionally, students will demonstrate the ability to practice, promote, and advocate for health-enhancing behaviors, and reduce health risks for personal, peer, and community health.

ELECTIVES

Elective classes at The New Community School expose students to range of opportunities to explore interests and ignite passions. These courses offer opportunities to learn new skills, develop artistic talents, and explore new creative pathways. Our elective teachers encourage creative risk-taking within a structured framework of curriculum guidelines. Most courses are scheduled on a semester basis. Students are evaluated using a standards based-assessment system. Students may discover a passion that flourishes into a future area of collegiate study. Elective course experiences often lead to new paths of success that also translate into deeper friendships, a stronger sense of self, and a higher level of confidence.

Middle School Exploratory Classes

The Exploratory courses give 5th and 6th grade students an opportunity to start off the year with TNCS 101. This first-quarter class provides a foundation in basic student skills and aids in TNCS community building. Students can then sample some of TNCS's most popular electives by choosing from a variety of modules. In these 9-week versions of Consenses Art, Visual Art, Lego Robotics, Introductory Programming, Guitar, Drama, and iPad Photography students will learn fundamentals that will prepare them for a full-length version in the future. In ConSenses Art, students will explore our world through the lens of photography, music, paint, dance, and poetry. The course will focus on unique perspectives and the nature of items/people. In Visual 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 Lego Robotics, students 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. Students also engage in a topical project aimed developing innovative solutions to real-world problems. Introductory Programming introduces students to the basics of computer programming using a variety of resources, including Scratch and Swift Playground. Students will primarily use block-based programming to create simple, fun programs that encourage creativity and algorithmic thinking. In Guitar students will learn basic care, parts, tuning, and chords. Guitars are provided. Drama Exploratory is a beginning course of theater where students are introduced to an overview of drama. 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. In addition, the student will learn basic evaluative techniques of dramatic productions. The iPad Photography elective teaches students how to use the iPad as an artistic tool. Various apps are explored while students create unique works.

Philosophy 7-8

Philosophy is ancient and universal discipline. The questions posed in this elective receive answers from philosophers who span almost 3,000 years of history and who represent a wide variety of cultures. Topics will be divided into 4 major areas including Values, Knowledge, Reality and Logic. A question and an activity will allow students to explore and form their own philosophical opinion and then discuss and compare their ideas with that of an historical philosopher as well as the class.

8th Grade Capstone

The Eighth Grade Seminar is a 9-week required course. Designed as a capstone experience for eighth graders, the course will incorporate 21st century skills such as collaboration, critical thinking, creativity, communication, and entrepreneurship. The course is divided into mini-units. Students will complete a "Pursue Your Passion" project. This project will be self-selected based on personal interest, research based, and require a product at the end. Students will also participate in a small business group. As a team, students will: brainstorm and decide on a business idea, design the concept, try the idea in real life, and then debrief and analyze the success of the business.

The Green Garden Project 5-8

The Green Garden Project (TGGP) elective will incorporate working with your hands and activating your mind through researching, planning, and implementing ways to beautify our campus inside and out. TGGP will plant and maintain seasonal produce, herbs, plants, and flowers throughout the semester through a seedling starting project that will then be transferred to a raised garden bed and large planters on campus. We will also incorporate art and ceramics by designing and creating hanging planters and flower vases to support our indoor/outdoor garden projects. Some of our time will be spent supporting a community recycling initiative of paper and cans. Most importantly, this elective's mission will be focused on community, outreach and education, and designing lovely green spaces for our campus to enjoy.

Introduction to the Woodshop 5-8

This is an introductory 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. They learn to make simple drawings from which to build individual projects. The focus is on shop safety, the safe use of hand tools, and the basic techniques of shaping, joining, and finishing wood. Students develop a foundation for a lifelong interest in wood craftsmanship, and explore creative expression in wood. There is little use of power machinery in this course, as many of the techniques of fine craftsmanship depend on competent use of traditional hand saws, planes, and chisels.

Woodworking: Basic Handcraft Skills 9-12

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 some techniques of basic joinery. 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.

Personal Finance

Personal Finance is a quarter-long required course for sophomores designed to improve students' financial literacy. Centered around the theme of understanding the basics of personal finances, it focuses on gaining a better understanding of banking basics, saving and investing, earning income and paying taxes, and the benefits and process of preparing a budget. Students will be educated and motivated to adopt responsible financial habits.

Junior Seminar

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 work with the college counselor to explore college programs and services available to students with learning differences.

Senior Seminar

The Senior Seminar is a semester-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: leadership, career-planning, professionalism, and public speaking. At the start of the semester, students will investigate career options, establish a relationship with a professional in a chosen field, and hone their professional skills. Students will write a resume, a cover letter, and will complete an on-campus interview assessment. This unit culminates in the Senior Job Shadow Day. After this unit, students will develop public speaking skills. They will participate in public speaking games to get them comfortable in front of an audience and then write their *This I Believe* Senior Speech. This unit culminates with the senior speech assignment. All seniors must present their *This I Believe* speech during an Upper School Assembly. 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

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.

Entrepreneurship

In Entrepreneurship, students will develop their own business idea and present it at a Founder's Fair. Students will learn essential skills and personal qualities needed to succeed as an entrepreneur. The course will primarily focus on an online program called the Junior Founder's Club. Students will have the opportunity to design, launch, and grow their own business through this program. The course will culminate in a Founder's Fair where students present their ideas to the community and their peers.

Careers in Science 9-12

This course will take an exploratory look into various fields of science and the careers involved in them. There will be hands on science activities and experiments as well as a few visits to laboratories, corporations, and businesses involved in scientific fields.

Art 7-8

Art 7-8 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.

Introduction to Visual Arts 9-12

Introduction to Visual Arts is a team-taught upper school course that provides students with the pre-requisite experiences needed for most of the more advanced visual arts classes offered. Students will spend nine weeks in an introductory drawing class. They 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. They will maintain a sketchbook that will continually track their growth with exercises and assignments specifically designed to engage right brain thinking. They will also spend nine weeks in an introduction to digital photography. In this section of the course, students will explore functions of the camera. They will be learn editing programs such as iPhoto, Adobe Photoshop, and Adobe Lightroom CC Classic. They will develop a basic understanding of both the compositional aspects of picture taking and the technical aspects

Ceramics and Sculpture 9-12

In Ceramics and Sculpture students will learn to make educated decisions regarding form in order to create sculptural works of art. The course will primarily focus on ceramics work. Essential techniques for hand building in ceramics will be taught. Students will also have the opportunity to grow their wheel throwing skills. Additional sculptural materials such as fibers, wire, and paper maché may be used alone or in conjunction with ceramics work. This course will teach the artistic behaviors necessary to plan and sequence a successful art project.

Level II: Oil and Hot Wax Painting 9-12

After students develop their ability to see in order to draw in prerequisite *Introduction to the Visual Arts* students will then further their understanding of two-dimensional art in *Oil and Hot Wax Painting*. This course will divide the semester into 2 distinct quarters. The first quarter will focus on oil paint, an advanced level material that naturally allows for realistic, long-term rendering and blending. The final quarter will focus on hot wax (encaustic) paint. This material naturally lends itself to more abstract expressive creations that can be painted, melted, carved, and worked in many experimental ways. Students will complete works from direct observation, imagination and photographic reproduction. Color theory, aesthetic theory and famous painters will be discussed in order to guide students towards independent and purposeful creative behaviors.

Digital Photography 9-12

Students will learn first-hand how to operate a DSLR camera. We will train our eyes to see the world through a viewfinder and archive fleeting moments of life. Students will understand particular functions that can alter the meaning and create artistic expression in a photograph. Students will organize and manage a library of photographs and be able to edit their photographs to enhance the quality and be ready to print. Students will be introduced to editing programs such as iPhoto, Adobe Photoshop, and Adobe Lightroom CC Classic. Finally, by seeing pictures that have been taken multiple times working in iteration students will practice problem solving and connecting their expectation with reality.

Drama 6-8

In this beginning course of theatre, students are introduced to an overview of drama through the lens of producing a play. 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. In addition, the student will learn basic evaluative techniques of dramatic productions.

Drama Skills 9-12

In this drama course, students explore all aspects of what it takes to produce a play. This includes acting, directing, improvisational work, costume design, set design, and stage management. Classes include acting games as well as brief lessons on the history of theater, television, and film. Students will analyze portions of famous scripts and learn how to “block” short scenes. Students in this course will also have the opportunity to help behind the scenes with the Middle School Drama Production.

Drama 9-12

This drama elective is an introduction to theatre with an emphasis on basic acting skills through the lens of producing a two-act play. The objective of this course is to give the student a well-rounded theater education through analyzing characters, learning blocking, and performing in front of an audience.

Introduction to Guitar 7-12

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.

Creative Writing 9-12

Creative Writing gives students the opportunity to develop their own writing identities. Through a workshop setting, students will experiment with a variety of forms and creative strategies and communicate with peers to strengthen pieces. Workshops will be supplemented with discussion about writers' craft in a variety of model texts. Students will finish the course by collaborating to publish a school literary magazine. Students will leave the course with tactics to find inspiration for writing in the world, media, and imagination—and to continue to evolve as writers.

Music Recording Studio 9-12

Students will use GarageBand software to write and record music. Students will have access to a variety of instruments: piano, electronic keyboard, acoustic and electric guitar, bass, banjo, and snare drum. Students will research fundamental elements of quality recordings and try their hand at applying these skills in a recording studio setting. After recording is complete, it will be time to learn proper editing and mixing techniques. In addition, at the heart of any great recording is a great song. Song writing will play a big part in this course. Students must have decent musical ability and be self-directed.

TECHNOLOGY COURSES

Keyboarding 7

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 20 words per minute with 85% accuracy is met as a nine-week course. 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.

Multimedia 5-8

Multimedia is for students who want to create and display digital projects. Students will learn to use software to edit digital photos. Videos will be enhanced with visual effects and audio clips. Safety, etiquette, and ethical principles are highlighted while students explore online to find material. Finished projects will be displayed on a blog allowing students to receive feedback from families and faculty members. Multimedia Design is recommended for students who demonstrate a high level of interest in creating projects on a computer.

Programming 7-8

Programming teaches students fundamental coding concepts using real Swift code. Students will expand their coding skills and start thinking more like an app developer. Students will work collaboratively to practice their skills, solve puzzles, and design their own creations.

Robotics 6-8

The Robotics MS 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. The course emphasizes use of the engineering-design process. Students first identify the important characteristics of the robot to be designed. Then, they ideate, implement, and test ideas to develop the best possible robot design. Some students may choose to "specialize" in robot design, competitive strategy, or coding and programming; however, all students in the class will be expected to participate in all aspects of the program and develop basic skills in designing, building, and programming the robot.

Robotics 9-12

The VEX Robotics elective course provides students opportunities to develop skills in engineering, coding and programming, innovation, and collaboration, with the aim of competing in regional VEX robotics demonstrations and tournaments. Students work as a team to design, build, program, and operate a robot. The course emphasizes use of the engineering-design process. Students first identify the important characteristics of the robot to be designed. Then, they ideate, implement, and test ideas to develop the best possible robot design. Some students may choose to "specialize" in robot design, competitive strategy, or coding and programming; however, all students in the class will be expected to participate in all aspects of the program and develop basic skills in designing, building, and programming the robot.

STEAM 5-8

The STEAM MS elective course provides students opportunities to develop skills in science, technology, engineering, art, and math through applying the engineering design process to develop solutions to a series of challenges. Students work both individually and collaboratively to develop solutions to these challenges. Students first identify the important characteristics of the challenge to be overcome. They then research, ideate, implement, and test ideas to develop the best possible design for their solution. Artistry is woven through the design of each solution.

Introduction to App Development

The Introduction to App Development course introduces the students to the world of app development and the basics of Swift and Xcode. Students will get practical experience with the tools, techniques, and concepts needed to build a basic iOS app from scratch. At the end of the course, students will build one of two basic iOS apps.