



Morristown-Beard School

MIDDLE SCHOOL SIGNATURE PROGRAMS



SIGNATURE PROGRAMS

MBS Middle School offers an array of Signature Programs designed to achieve our goal of making the middle school a “place of possibilities.” The years from sixth through eighth grade are essential as students search for identities, defining themselves in terms of new relationships and roles with peers and adults. In whatever classroom, and beyond the classroom, learning in middle school is fundamentally social and emotional: deepening their awareness of self and others, students form a sense of how they might contribute to and flourish in the world. Our Signature Programs foster that development in ways that reinforce and build on traditional learning models. Through our signature programs, students will be inspired to explore, discover, and act.



“WRITE IT”

Even as students in Middle School are figuring out who they are in the world, they are asked to communicate their ideas, express

themselves, and discover who they are on the page. Middle School writing demands students gain rapid familiarity with a range of modes, audiences, and occasions. At MBS, we recognize the intensity of the challenge, and the social and emotional learning that is intertwined with it, providing students in seventh and eighth grade with intensive writing workshop periods that supplement their regular English classes. In “Possibilities of Writing” workshops, students are given space to nurture their reading interests, and encouraged to explore a range of writing styles and occasions with space for self-reflection.



EXTRA-MURAL EDUCATION: LEARNING BEYOND THE CLASSROOM WALLS

MBS encourages Middle School students to foster an awareness that their learning in the classroom and activities on campus have a place in the world at large. In each year of the Middle School program, students and teachers extend their learning through regular and purposeful off-campus visits, trips, and outreach programs. Each year includes national trips to Philadelphia and Washington DC as well as international trips to Quebec and Costa Rica. Recent local contexts for student learning have included visits to Morristown community service initiatives and the neighboring Frelinghuysen Arboretum and Whippany River. A key experience for the sixth grade class, is a voyage at seas! Using a five foot mini-boat equipped with sensors and tracking devices, our students track weather, calculate distances and research the places where the boat lands. The mini-boat program has enabled our students to make connections with people from other lands and explore the global. In all of these, students discover how their learning depends on and contributes to larger contexts, and they deepen their awareness of the numerous communities to which they belong and contribute.



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continued

TECHNOLOGY FOR COLLABORATIVE LEARNING

MBS recognizes that technology permeates the lives of adolescents. But MBS also recognizes that adolescents are susceptible to taking technology for granted, using it without purpose, and too-readily accepting the ways in which it shapes daily experience. Technology in the MBS classroom is a social endeavor, working against the isolating potential of many features of adolescent technological life. At MBS Middle School, you will find math classes where



students coordinate learning via Google drive, science classes where students work together to achieve and expand understanding through collaborative video projects, and music classes where students harmonize voice and electronic programs. Making technology the center of a social

experience, students confront the constraints of technology as well as the horizons they open, for understanding not only the world, but how they can shape the world together.

SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL COMPETENCIES

Each year, the Middle School at MBS provides students with formally and informally structured occasions to reflect on their personal and interpersonal growth. Through regularly-scheduled discussions, lectures, and activities in classes and workshops, students gain an understanding of how their nascent identities are defined by



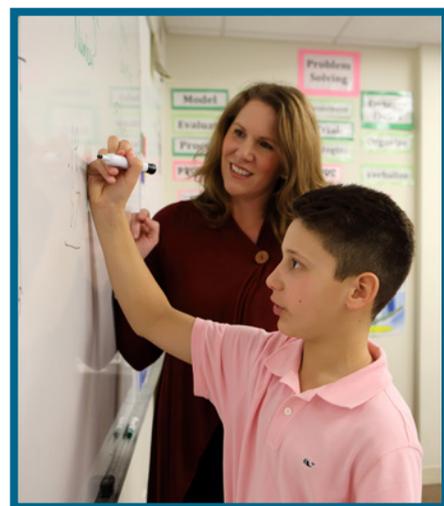
increasingly complex relationships in their lives. Students consider topics ranging from navigating social media to gender norms and pressures. They cultivate strategies for speaking up on behalf of themselves and others, and they learn how to productively engage friends and peers over differences of opinion and disagreements. Of central importance to the MBS Middle School experience is the advisory program, which facilitates communication between teachers and attentiveness to students' individual needs, as well as anchoring the daily middle school experience in a space of social understanding.

CENTER FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING

Students throughout the Middle School receive support and instruction from the Center for Teaching and Learning. As students enter middle school, they can face more challenging schoolwork and, often, more deeply involving extracurricular commitments. Providing students with a dedicated work space and specialized faculty, the Center for Teaching and Learning helps students to cultivate the skills they need to steer their learning trajectories, managing their time and cultivating study-strategies for reading, math, projects, and problem solving. Guided by the recognition that learning differences characterizes the educational experience in all classrooms, the Center for Teaching and Learning is an invaluable resource for all students at MBS.

FINANCIAL LITERACY

Each Middle School class suspends its normal activities for a portion of the year to offer students a mini-semester (a "mini-mester") on financial literacy. The aim is to provide students not only with a basic sense of personal financial principles, but to understand how finance ties together societies on local and global scales.



Students in each grade will learn about a range of problems of increasing complexity, with students exploring topics such as "What is a statistic," "Credit and Debt," "Proposal Writing," "Branding," and "Entrepreneurship." The different topics complement and build on course-work, but also offer an alternative window onto where their learning might lead them.