

# Middle School

## Grades 5-8

### Curriculum



Address 8012 Oak St., New Orleans, LA 70118-2708  
School Office (504) 861-3743 Fax (504) 861-3973  
Admissions Office (504) 866-6553 Fax (504) 866-6554  
Website [www.standrewsepiscopalschool.org](http://www.standrewsepiscopalschool.org)  
Email [admissions@standrewsepiscopalschool.org](mailto:admissions@standrewsepiscopalschool.org)

#### **Faculty:**

5th Grade Advisor (Language Arts and Math) and, Middle School Coordinator, Middle School Dean of Students  
5th Grade Teacher (History and Science)

Science Department Chair (Grades 5-8) and 6th Grade Advisor

English Department Chair (Grades 5-8) and 7th Grade Advisor

History Department Chair (Grades 6-8) and 8th Grade Advisor

Math Department Chair (Grades 6-8)

Spanish

PE

Music

Art

Health

Religion

Library

Technology

Life Skills

**Schedule:** Homeroom in 5<sup>th</sup> Grade, with Departmentalized Instruction for English and Math/ Science and History, Spanish, and all Enrichment courses; Fully Departmentalized in Grades 6-8, on a modified block schedule.

**Advisory:** Advisory Program begins in 5<sup>th</sup> Grade, with one Advisor in 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> Grades. Advisory meets each morning at 7:50 a.m. and again for at least 30 minutes each week. Advisory is a planning and community-building time, with each Advisor responsible for the social, emotional, and academic progress of each Advisee.

**Extracurricular Activities:** Interscholastic Athletics in Cross-Country, Flag Football, Volleyball, Soccer, Basketball, Lacrosse, Swimming and Tennis; Student Council Leadership Opportunities; Musical Performances in Vocal Ensemble and Hand Bell Choir; Service Opportunities; After-School Programs; Middle School Dance.

**Class Field Trips:** Past trips have been 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Day Retreat; 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Overnight Camping; 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Overnight Environmental Science Retreat in Dauphin Island; 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Trip to Washington, DC and VA, Philadelphia, and Costa Rica.

**High School Outplacement:** Over the past fourteen years, St. Andrew's graduates have matriculated at the following twenty different high schools: Academy of Sacred Heart, Archbishop Shaw, Benjamin Franklin, Brother Martin, Cabrini, Darrow, De La Salle, Dominican, Holy Cross, Isidore Newman, Jesuit, Louise S. McGehee, Lusher, Metairie Park Country Day, Mount Carmel, NOCCA, Renew, Riverdale, St. Martin's Episcopal, Ursuline Academy.

# Fifth Grade

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### Math

Mastery of the four operations is an important milestone for Fifth Grade students in preparation for departmentalized math courses in Grades Six through Eight. Reading and writing ordinal numbers as well as learning to read and write numbers in standard and expanded form to the billions place value are also foundational skills. In Fifth Grade students are introduced to powers of base 10, and the relationship between fractions, decimals, and percentages. Problem solving strategies are utilized on a daily basis with an emphasis on connecting math to real world applications. Technology and the use of manipulatives are integrated into daily instruction to enhance comprehension of new concepts.

### English/Language Arts

Comprehension strategies, the writing process, grammar, and vocabulary expansion are major components of English classes in Fifth Grade. Students read and analyze short stories, novels, and poetry. Written compositions include creative and expository pieces. Students are guided through the writing process while mastering sentence and paragraph structure. Students study parts of speech, grammar usage and mechanics, and punctuation. Vocabulary words are derived from novels, stories, and cross-curricular studies. Technology is utilized for creation, collaboration, and sharing of student work.

### Science

In 5th grade, students gain an understanding of a healthy ecosystem and are able to identify the important roles of decomposers, consumers, and producers. They study the geosphere, hydrosphere, atmosphere, and biosphere and learn how these systems interact. They develop models to examine patterns caused by the relative positions of Earth and the sun, and identify matter as particles of matter too small to be seen. Students work with tools to precisely measure volume and mass for a variety of activities and experiments. They heed to safe lab practices and communicate their findings based on data.

### History

Students begin the year studying about the early civilizations and Native American Cultures of North America. They chronologically move into colonial times, causes and effects of the American Revolution, the formation of a new government, the writing of the American Constitution, and the American Civil War. Students also briefly examine America's involvement in World War I and World War II. Map reading skills and the identification of physical and political features of the United States are developed. Note taking is an important new skill that is stressed throughout Middle School. Students use graphic organizers and outlining for organizing thoughts, and to aid in understanding of concepts. PowerPoint presentations, Prezies, and group projects are created to share their ideas.

# Science Grades 6-8 Curriculum



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The goal of the Middle School science program is to provide an academically rigorous curriculum which allows for growth in responsibility, creative problem solving, and thoughtful sharing of ideas through technology and public speaking. The program strives to deliver engaging activities and investigations which supply the motivation necessary to promote the desire to learn which is inherent in us all. By the time students finish the Middle School science program they should be active, independent learners who formulate thoughtful questions and are equipped to seek substantive answers.

## 6<sup>th</sup> Grade, 7<sup>th</sup> Grade, and 8<sup>th</sup> Grade

In 6th, 7th and 8th grades, students observe phenomena and utilize inquiry to explore scientific questions. They are guided through problem solving methods and an engineering process to engage in challenge-based labs. Units culminate with the application of their knowledge to design real-world problems or experience the work of someone in a scientific field.

In 6th grade, students explore Earth science topics including geology, meteorology and astronomy. Students produce evidence of their learning as they collaborate and manage their different perspectives. Students learn to look for “failure” while testing their prototypes so that building strategies can improve during a rebuild process.

In 7th grade, students focus on life science topics including cellular biology, botany, genetics and human anatomy. Labs often extend to also using the compound microscopes and referencing news headlines and scientific articles. Long term projects provide time to synthesize data and create a meaningful platform for applying knowledge.

In 8th grade, students focus on the introduction of physics and chemistry. Molecular concepts are understood, while their real-world applications of the chemistry of food and drink, health-care and cleaning products can be related. Students build models representing thermal dynamics, laws of motion and the electromagnetic spectrum. Long term products might apply to students improving the thermodynamics of a building, and the use of waves for entertainment. Online articles are tailored and adapted to each students' reading to ensure that they are challenged at a rate that is monitored.

# Social Studies/History

## Grades 6-8

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#### 6th Grade

The core content area for the Sixth Grade history is the study of ancient world cultures. This primarily focuses on several ancient civilizations (i.e., Mesopotamia, Egypt, India, China, Greece, Rome, Byzantine, Islamic, Africa, Japan). Students study the origins, beliefs, and impact of the major world religions. As they learn to interpret a variety of maps, charts, timelines, and tables, they examine major continents, countries, and physical features around the world. Students conduct research individually and with partners following steps outlined in the course.

Information is presented to the class through oral reports accompanied by Power Point or Prezi. Each unit of study will include a document based essay assignment which requires students to employ primary and secondary sources in their written historical arguments. In the second or trimester, students will learn how to complete a research paper using MLA documentation and format.

#### 7th Grade

The Seventh Grade course begins with a study of the Renaissance, the Reformation, the Enlightenment, and the Age of Expansion, proceeds to the age of absolute monarchies, and continues to the world events leading up to World War I. United States history is interwoven with the Age of Revolution, the Industrial Revolution, and the Age of Reform. An extended civics unit on the U.S. Constitution and how our federal government works is highlighted. The changing map of Europe is monitored, and the relationship of cause and effect (economic, social, political) is identified in these changes and all major events. Students explore topics by using textbooks and researching a variety of resources. Each unit of study will include a document based essay assignment which requires students to employ primary and secondary sources in their written historical arguments. In the second or trimester, students will learn how to complete a research paper using MLA documentation and format.

#### 8th Grade

From the study of the early inhabitants of Louisiana and the subsequent colonization of the area first by France and then by Spain, Eighth Grade students learn about the involvement of Louisiana in the American Revolution, the Louisiana Purchase, the War of 1812, and the American Civil War. The historical focus then shifts to 20<sup>th</sup> Century America and modern times. Map skills are utilized during the study of the world wars, and economics are analyzed during the segment of the Great Depression. A study of the last several decades gives students a clearer understanding of how our current political, economic, and cultural issues were developed nationally and locally. Each unit of study will include a document-based essay assignment which requires students to employ primary and secondary sources in their written historical arguments. In the second or trimester, students will learn how to complete a research paper using MLA documentation and format.

# Math Grades 6-8 Curriculum



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## 6th Grade

Sixth Graders strengthen their computation skills with fractions, decimals, percents, integers, and rational numbers. Students utilize skills in operations and estimation, measurements, geometry, graphing ratios, proportions, rate and distance, and exponents and integers. Critical thinking and developing strategies are emphasized. Students learn to understand the language and communication of mathematics, to apply formulas, and to engage in problem solving activities. Computer applications and activities are integrated throughout the course.

## 7th Grade

Mathematics in Seventh Grade reinforces students' understanding of mathematical concepts as they transition from arithmetic to algebraic thinking. Students solidify their understanding of many topics developed in Sixth Grade math such as integer operations, proportion, percent, probability, and geometry. In addition, students are exposed to a wide variety of abstract topics such as more advanced work with equations and inequalities, operations involving exponents, and graphing linear equations. Emphasis is placed on reasoning and problem solving using a variety of strategies. Computer applications and activities are integrated throughout the course.

## 8th Grade

Eighth Graders are split into two groups in order to more appropriately prepare each student for math in high school. The Algebra I group studies linear, quadratic, and exponential functions, equations and inequalities, systems of equations and inequalities, exponents and roots, polynomials, and data analysis. Problem solving, critical thinking, and real-world application of mathematical concepts are part of each lesson. The Eighth Grade Math group works to build their confidence in math while solidifying their understanding of rational numbers, proportions, and geometric relationships. Students also study linear functions, exponents and roots, and systems of equations. Computer applications and activities are integrated throughout both courses.

# English / Language Arts Grades 6-8 Curriculum



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## 6th Grade

Sixth grade is a transitional year in English when grammar is emphasized to gain a deep understanding of the English language with the goal of applying the concepts to their writing in 7th grade. In writing, the year begins by studying more complex sentence structures as the students learn to join sentences, diversify their sentence construction, and add more details to their writing. The class progresses from analyzing their sentences to writing heavily supported paragraphs to constructing essays. 6th graders also begin the progression toward studying literature versus reading. Although reading strategies are emphasized, students begin to annotate a text, through guided practice, not only for comprehension, but also to analyze a novel, poem, or short story for literary devices, figurative language, characterization, points-of-view, and theme. As students discuss the literature text, they begin to learn how to prove discussion points by extracting support directly from the text. Each student will continue to develop, finetune and add to the new concepts introduced in 6th grade at their own pace over the course of the three year curriculum.

## 7th Grade

In 7th grade, the grammar curriculum continues to advance into such topics as verbal phrases, appositives, adverbial and adjectival clauses, which leads to a comprehensive understanding of punctuating and constructing diverse sentences. As the students master the components of the English language through grammar, they realize how it applies to their writing. For example, if we are studying participial phrases, they will now use the phrases to diversify their sentence beginnings and to add more details to their writing. Students will write narrative, literary analysis, and persuasive essays. The reading level progresses to texts with more advanced vocabulary, sentence construction, and literary depth with more complex and mature themes. The students will independently annotate texts for figurative language, characterization, in-text connections, text-to-text connections, and plot development. In the seventh grade, the students learn the concepts of a Socratic Thinking Circle and are evaluated on discussions from their reading, which they develop as they annotate.

## 8th Grade

By 8th grade, students review grammar at the beginning of the year; however, the focus shifts to a full application of grammar into their writing. Comma and other mechanical rules are reinforced through daily practice and the editing process. As the students begin to master the mechanics of writing, they begin to study how to creatively and effectively structure their writing to promote interest from a reader. They learn to utilize similes, personification, hyperbole, and symbolism and weave metaphors throughout a narrative to add to the content and main point of the essay. Each student will choose a topic to defend in a persuasive research essay that will focus on selecting reputable research sources, organizing research, documenting research with APA or MLA standards, and formulating an argument. During the literature units, students will also write literary analysis essays after discussing a text in small and larger group discussions and Socratic Thinking Circles. The year culminates with reading a Shakespearean play and then, as a final project, creating a movie from one of the scenes and also performing the scene for the school.