



MIDDLEBRIDGE SCHOOL



CURRICULUM GUIDE
ACADEMIC YEAR 2023-2024



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MISSION

The mission of Middlebridge School is to provide instruction, opportunities, and support for students with learning differences. Our community is designed to develop students' academic abilities, intellectual curiosity, and physical and social-emotional development. We strive to create life-long learners with increased independence and maturity who thrive in the postgraduate setting of their choice.

PHILOSOPHY

All students with language-based learning differences have unique strengths and the potential to be active contributors to their communities. We teach students to develop their strengths and utilize their talents so that they can develop into self-assured, self-aware young men and women. In order to successfully navigate our global community, students need to develop both their academic and their social and emotional skills. Staff members at Middlebridge School develop strong interpersonal relationships with students and their families in order to emphasize students' strengths and address their challenges in a nurturing, supportive environment. These relationships extend from the classrooms, with small class sizes, individualized academic programs, and 1:1 tutorials, to the residential settings. Middlebridge School's environment integrates students' learning throughout the curriculum and between the academic and residential components of the program. Integration promotes multi-sensory learning and generalizes learning across settings. Middlebridge School's program is designed to facilitate students' success not only in high school, but also in the larger community beyond. By developing students' abilities in the multiple components of Middlebridge School's program, including a strong community and life-skills approach, Middlebridge School will enable students to create and achieve future aspirations that once seemed impossible.



A GUIDE TO THE GUIDE

The Middlebridge Curriculum Guide provides information geared towards enabling students to achieve grade-level academic standards. The curriculum guide can be used to assist students in learning content through smaller increments, catching up on content they may have missed in previous years, and/or reviewing content related to grade-level academic standards.

The authors of this guide have used their academic content knowledge and experiential knowledge related to students with learning differences to produce this resource to help close the gap between grade-level content and students' instructional levels.

Middlebridge School's academic curriculum is built on a foundation consisting of three sources: the Rhode Island Department of Education standards, national standards, and educator experience with students with learning differences. Classes are small, consisting of between 3-7 students per class in order to individualize instruction and design lessons and activities based on students' unique learning styles. Classrooms are structured to be dynamic, multisensory, and student-centered. Instruction is focused on building bridges between concepts and settings to maximize student understanding, application, and retention of material. Please refer to the Distance Learning Handbook for policies regarding remote learning.

Across content areas, courses are designed each year to specifically address the needs of the students within each class period. Thus, the exact scope and sequence of topics may vary from year to year within any given course.

In the spirit of Middlebridge's philosophy of teaching the whole child, the Curriculum Guide offers the complete range of academic offerings. Specifically, it includes descriptions of both required and elective courses as well as the sequence of courses students take on the way to graduation. More broadly, it is a road map with which students and parents can envision the full picture of their Middlebridge experience.

BREAKDOWN OF YEARLY REQUIREMENTS

Graduation Requirements

Students are awarded a Rhode Island state high school diploma after completing all graduation requirements, as determined by the Academic Dean in consultation with the other administrators, staff members, the graduating student, and parents. Middlebridge School is an ungraded institution, but students are identified as 11th graders in their second-to-last year in our high school program for the purposes of transition planning. As 11th graders, students make clear to the Academic Office their intention to graduate the following year.

To be eligible for graduation, students must complete the following graduation requirements:

- Students must earn 20 credits (20 year-long courses) in core academic areas. Students are expected to complete at least 4 credits of English/ Language Arts, 4 credits of Math, 3 credits of Science, 3 credits of Social Studies, and 2 credits of Wellness. In addition, students will receive credits for being enrolled in Social & Emotional Intelligence. Students carry a full course load each year, including a 1:1 Language Tutorial or Academic Coaching, core content, and internships.
- Students must demonstrate proficiency within their core academic classes, as detailed in the Middlebridge School expectations within each content area. Students' skills and knowledge are evaluated through in-class assessments that cover multiple modalities including tests and quizzes, written work, individual and group projects, and presentations. Teachers utilize rubrics for assignments to clarify expectations and assess students' progress.
- Students must be enrolled at Middlebridge School for at least two full academic years prior to graduation, attending regularly. Determination of adequate attendance is made by the Academic Office.

GRADUATION



Graduation

Graduation is a time for parents/guardians, families, students, and seniors to celebrate and acknowledge all of their successes and accomplishments. The Senior Class will be announced once the school year commences, and graduation information and the schedule of events will be distributed to parents/guardians in a timely manner.

Postgraduate Placement and Advising

Students have a variety of options when exploring what post secondary placement may be the best for them. It is essential that students, families, and Middlebridge School staff work together throughout this process in order to determine where a student will be most successful, have access to the appropriate supports, be challenged, and most important, be happy. Parents/guardians should contact the Director of Transition Services and/or Academic Office to discuss students' individualized plans.

NARRATIVE REPORTING

Semester Reports

Behind every report card is an effective assessment process. At Middlebridge, the assessment process for each student is ongoing, and reflects our commitment to nurturing the student holistically and methodically. Accordingly, as assessments are modified to meet the needs of the student, our reporting system reflects the philosophy of the school.

Twice a year, parents and guardians receive a series of detailed reports that contain a thorough description of each of their child's course curricula, as well as two narrative evaluations per class: the first discussing the individual's areas of strength within the course, and the second detailing the specific interventions that teachers used to enable the student to overcome any learning challenges that they may have encountered during the first five months of school. Readers of these narrative evaluations will find that the writing speaks to the high level of communication and consistency among faculty. The narratives will most likely contain the same themes throughout each class which detail similar strengths and interventions per student, as instructors strive to best serve the needs of the individual.

Though each student will also receive a letter grade indicating their academic progress in a course-- or a Pass/Fail in the case of 1:1 Language Tutorials or Academic Coaching-- we find immense value within the narrative evaluations; this method of assessment truly aligns with the Middlebridge mission. Narrative evaluations allow readers to understand the pedagogical decisions that underlie the progress each student is making. Readers will learn of the progress a student is making as they strive to adopt self-assessment and evaluation strategies, learn and retain concepts, and heighten self-advocacy skills. Middlebridge reports are issued biannually, toward the end of January and in the middle of June.

At Middlebridge, we understand that it is impossible to share every detail of a student's progress within a biannual report. Consequently, families are encouraged to participate in conference calls with the Academic Office periodically throughout the year.

BIANNUAL GRID OF LEARNING OBJECTIVES

At Middlebridge School, we value skills just as much as content. Therefore, the Middlebridge learning objectives are broken into five strategic categories that are thoughtfully designed to target specific aspects of our students' learning profiles, no matter which content class a student is placed in.

The learning objectives allow instructors to tangibly track student progress and challenges within the following areas: metacognition, executive functioning, expressive language, receptive language, and critical thinking. They also allow instructors to utilize a common language when referring to our students. These objectives are used as a framework throughout the academic program in accordance with our philosophy and mission. It also gives us the opportunity to codify student progress.

The categories are designed with the intention of ensuring that each student is addressing areas that will aid them in becoming more independent and self-aware learners who are prepared for success within a post-secondary setting.

Effective communication, executive functioning, and metacognition skills are vital in helping our students improve their reading, writing, critical analysis, and problem-solving abilities, enabling them to navigate their educational journey successfully. Using this framework, students with learning differences become more independent and self-reliant, developing problem-solving, decision-making, and time management abilities as they take ownership of their learning and prepare for future academic and professional endeavors.

Metacognition

Demonstrates an awareness of targeted processes to reach a goal
Assesses own adherence to targeted processes to reach a goal
Chooses appropriate strategies for assigned tasks
Implements appropriate strategies for assigned tasks
Can apply the above strategies to identify and achieve collaborative goals

Executive Functioning

Is prepared with appropriate and necessary tools and materials
Keeps materials and personal environment in order
Transitions appropriately from tasks and activities and school environments
Accurately estimates time to complete tasks
Allots time relative to long, medium, and short-range tasks

Expressive Language

Recognizes conventions of nonverbal language
Employs language relevant to the situation
Employs vocabulary relative to the context
Asks and answers questions clearly
Participates as a speaker

Receptive Language

Demonstrates nonverbal listening behaviors
Listens and communicates with a purpose
Asks questions for clarification during a discussion
Synthesizes information gained from listening
Demonstrates understanding

Critical Thinking

Explains the purpose and significance of what is happening in class.
Distinguishes between facts and opinions.
Empathically represents viewpoints with which they disagree
Identifies cause and effect relationships between subjects, disciplines, and texts.
Demonstrates flexibility when working to achieve a targeted goal.



VIRTUAL LEARNING

A Brief Note

In the event Middlebridge School decides that virtual and/or distance learning is appropriate for the community, Middlebridge will implement its Distance-Learning Plan and will follow the guidelines and expectations outlined within the MBS Distance-Learning Handbook.

Unless the whole school is learning through a virtual learning platform, access to classes via Zoom will only be permitted to students who may be home for medical-related short absences. In the event that a student's family and/or Middlebridge School determine a Mental Health Leave or an Extended Family Leave may be in the best interest of a student, Middlebridge School will do their best to support the student and the family from afar. Middlebridge teachers and tutors will post schoolwork to student's MYMBS Account and students can have the option of completing classwork asynchronously. Students who are on a Mental Health or Family Leave will not be permitted to join classes via Zoom.



THE ACADEMIC PROGRAM

The academic program consists of instruction in English/Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, History/Social Studies, Social & Emotional Intelligence, and Physical Education/Health and Wellness. Class sizes vary generally from three to seven students. In addition, all students attend 1:1 Tutorials or Academic Coaching every day and a proctored Study Hall four days a week to reinforce their academic skills. Students' class schedules are determined by their testing backgrounds, current performance, previous exposure in content areas, reading ability, processing speed, written output, social skills, and individual interests.

The academic program is success-oriented, which drives the selection of materials, the pace of progress through curriculum, how assignments and assessments are designed, and the interactions between teachers and students. Students are placed in small classes, with peers who share similar learning profiles, and teachers create expectations that are appropriate to students' strengths and weaknesses. The classroom is a safe, dynamic, highly interactive environment in which teachers and students work collaboratively to explore content, share ideas, and build skills.

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Each interaction in the classroom provides an opportunity to address areas of challenge and reinforce areas of strength for our students. Teachers are trained to tease out the source of students' confusion or error patterns, so that they can address these areas of difficulty. Students are provided multiple and varied opportunities to express their understanding and share their unique talents. With an understanding of their own unique strengths and weaknesses, and the many opportunities provided for them to experience success, students make tremendous academic gains and grow to become independent, lifelong learners.

Language-based, multi-sensory instruction is a fundamental component of the academic program at Middlebridge School. Classroom instruction, activities, and output assignments are designed to incorporate visual, auditory, tactile, and kinesthetic modalities. A language-based classroom offers highly structured activities. Structure and predictability ensure a sense of consistency within the classroom, supported by highly organized materials and clearly stated directions. Information is presented in an organized, sequential, and cumulative manner, and language and conceptual confusions are addressed immediately with direct and explicit instructions. Teachers use a high degree of repetition and paraphrasing, and they model appropriate use of language. Teachers regularly revisit previously learning material to assess learning and the acquisition of skills and knowledge. Presentations and lessons are presented with the students' levels of comprehension and reading levels in mind, so that students are able to do what is asked of them but are also continually challenged.

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

6:50 AM - 8:00 AM	Wake-up and House Job
7:45 AM - 8:40 AM	Breakfast 1 & 2
8:40 AM - 8:50 AM	Break
8:50 AM - 9:20 AM	Period 1
9:35 AM - 10:15 AM	Period 2
10:20 AM - 11:00 AM	Period 3
11:05 AM - 11:45 AM	Period 4
11:50 AM - 12:30 PM	Period 5A / Lunch 1
12:35 PM - 1:15 PM	Period 5B / Lunch 2
1:25 PM - 2:05 PM	Period 6
2:10 PM - 2:50 PM	Period 7
3:00 PM - 3:55 PM	Student Study Hall & Skills Lab
4:00 PM - 4:10 PM	Prepare For Electives
4:15 PM - 5:15 PM	Electives
5:30 PM - 6:00 PM	Dinner 1
6:05 PM - 6:35 PM	Dinner 2
6:45 PM - 8:00 PM	Residential Curriculum/Laundry/Community Activities
8:00 PM - 9:00 PM	Social Time
9:00 PM	Dormitory Curfew
9:00 PM - 9:30 PM	Residential Check-Ins/1:1 Meetings
9:00 PM - 9:30 PM	Dormitory Chores
9:00 PM - 9:30 PM	In Dormitory
9:30 PM - 10:00 PM	Prep for Bed/Turn in Electronics/In Room/Quiet Time
10:00 PM	Lights Out

ENGLISH

Middlebridge School's English curriculum emphasizes a breadth and depth of work within the humanities. The classroom environment is dynamic and engaging but also supportive so that students feel comfortable taking risks. Instruction emphasizes deeper comprehension of material, critical literary analysis, perspective taking, and creativity. Additionally, students gain experience writing in a variety of styles, including persuasive and critical essays, creative and dramatic writing, journals, and reflections. For written products, students utilize a recursive process that includes pre-writing, drafting, revising, editing, and feedback with the intention of producing a robust piece of work.

The MBS English program is unique in the sense that all class groupings are conducted through a thorough examination of cognitive profiles, a consideration of prior coursework within the English discipline, and a skills-based approach that provides individually tailored academic instruction to students with learning differences. In the English department, there is not a specific trajectory of courses for a student to engage in as they progress; rather, scheduling is conducted on a case-by-case basis that is informed by students' particular needs.

There are four primary classes within the English department that rely on the intersection of knowledge and ideas, upon which content is structured and tailored to the individual. A student could theoretically take Foundations of Literature twice during their time at Middlebridge, for example, and receive the same skills-based repetition through the delivery of new content. At Middlebridge, English classes are predicated on the knowledge that a well-cultivated critical thinker is shaped through integrity, reasoning, and empathy; therefore, all classes will expose students to literature and writing with the overall intention of encouraging intellectual autonomy through inquiry-based learning.

Foundations of Literature

In Foundations of Literature, students will study a variety of texts in order to understand and explain literary concepts such as characterization, setting, mood, plot, and theme. As they progress throughout the course, students will identify, discuss, and analyze abstract concepts presented within their texts, while continually assessing their own purpose for reading. Students will continue working with their instructor learn how to develop critical stances and cite evidence to support their stance, as well as identify points in which their comprehension breaks down.

Writing Workshop

In Writing Workshop, students will work with their instructor and peers to develop a series of compositions that demonstrate organization, elaboration, fluency, and clarity. Using a variety of texts as models, students will explore the writing process and apply learned strategies of paragraph structure to write clear, concise, and logical essays. Students will also explore writing for a variety of purposes: expository, narrative, descriptive, and persuasive. Though the emphasis of the course is on the writing and revision process, a careful analysis of literary works will aid students in making and supporting judgments about the quality of a text that they will then translate into their own analysis.

Literary Analysis and Composition

In Literary Analysis and Composition, students will use and apply literature terminology and techniques accurately within discussions and essays centered on important literary works. As they read for a variety of purposes, they will make and verify predictions based on their prior knowledge and understanding of genres. Students will be guided to clarify their understanding of a text by identifying inconsistencies and ambiguities, and will differentiate between implicit and explicit information in novels, poetry, and short stories.

College Writing

This college preparatory writing class is designed to help students become engaged readers and efficient cross-disciplinary writers. Accordingly, a strong writer must be able to read texts outside of his/her individual interests and formulate opinions predicated on logic and empathy. In class, students will read and learn to make connections between a range of documents, including nonfiction essays and books, short stories, newspapers, and excerpts from textbooks. Students learn to properly cite and incorporate outside sources to support their opinions and ideas. Many pre-writing strategies are incorporated to help organize students' ideas and aid them in initiating writing tasks such as persuasive essays, narratives, and critical responses. Students will also review a variety of editing techniques with the intention of improving their work. Ultimately, the goal of College Writing is to find a writing process that best fits each student's learning style and to use this process independently with any writing task in a post-secondary setting.

MATHEMATICS

The MBS Mathematics curriculum is divided into four areas of study that emphasize a conceptual understanding, practical application and generalization of concepts, and continuity of instruction to promote student growth over time. These areas are reflected in our course trajectory, correspond to Rhode Island learning standards, and focus on:

- solid foundations, automaticity, and practical applications in Foundational Math and Consumer Math
- visual and spatial problem-solving in Geometry
- patterns and variables in Pre-Algebra, Algebra I, Algebra II, & Algebra III
- advanced topics in individualized advanced courses including data analysis, statistics, and introductory college topics

Math instruction at Middlebridge School is multisensory and includes visual aids, manipulatives, and applied projects in addition to more traditional written work. Math courses emphasize showing all the steps to ensure accurate work, applying concepts through word problems and real-life projects, and note-taking and study skills.

Foundational Math

The Remedial Math course is focused on strengthening students' arithmetic skills and developing automaticity. Students review, practice, and apply the concepts of integers, fractions, decimals, measurement, exponents and square roots, ordering and the real number line, percent, and ratio. Instruction is multi-sensory, including manipulatives and projects that give students the opportunity to apply concepts within areas of interest. Emphasis is on using accurate and thorough work, including showing all of the steps when solving problems. Students also implement study skills strategies, including utilizing a binder for reference sheets and notes in a format that is easy to reference.

Pre-Algebra

The Pre-Algebra course is designed to build a strong foundation of mathematical skills necessary for a smooth transition from arithmetic to algebra. Students develop proficiency and automaticity in arithmetic skills, including performing operations on integers and all real numbers, working with powers and exponents, fractions and integers, decimals and percent. Students are introduced to algebraic concepts, including variables, expressions, and absolute value. They work with variables in combining like terms, utilizing the distributive property, and solving one-step equations and inequalities. Emphasis is on using accurate and thorough work, including showing all of the steps when solving problems. Students also implement study skills strategies, including utilizing a binder for reference sheets and notes in a format that is easy to reference.

Algebra I

In Algebra I, students use algebraic skills in a wide range of problem-solving situations. Students start by reviewing and reinforcing the arithmetic skills that will be the foundation for Algebra I, including all operations with fractions, the relationship between fractions, decimals, and percent, the real number system, and the order of operations. Algebra I topics include: solving equations, factoring, fractions, linear equations, functions, inequalities, word problems, and rational and irrational numbers. Emphasis is placed on problem solving and application principles. Students also implement study skills strategies, including utilizing a binder for reference sheets and notes in a format that is easy to reference.

Algebra II

Algebra II is designed to build on algebraic and geometric concepts. Students review and reinforce arithmetic and Algebra I skills, including the real number system, order of operations with integers, factoring with variables, and solving linear equations. Students develop advanced algebra skills such as performing operations on polynomials, graphing linear functions, imaginary and complex numbers, and solving quadratics. Emphasis is on multi-step processes and the application of concepts. Students also implement study skills strategies, including utilizing a binder for reference sheets and notes in a format that is easy to reference. Students in Algebra II will need a TI-83 calculator.

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Geometry

Areas of study in Geometry include angles, parallel and perpendicular lines, congruent and similar triangles, transformations, quadrilaterals and other polygons, circles and arcs, perimeter, area of various shapes, and the Pythagorean Theorem. Students work on problem solving and multi-step thinking, including “proving” theorems. Students also implement study skills strategies, including utilizing a binder for reference sheets and notes in a format that is easy to reference.

Algebra III

This course will consist of both realistic problem solving and detailed theoretical calculations involving trigonometry and algebra. Topics will include right triangle ratios, trigonometric functions and their graphs, identities, trigonometric equations, vectors, polar coordinates and complex numbers. This course covers the concepts that should be mastered before students can be successful in calculus and other advanced mathematics. Other topics will be added that pertain to student interests and needs.

Pre- Calculus & Calculus

Calculus is primarily concerned with developing students’ understanding of the concepts of calculus and providing experience with its methods and applications. The course emphasizes a multi-representational approach to calculus, with concepts, results, and problems being expressed geometrically, numerically, analytically, and verbally. The connections among these representations also are important. The focus of the course is application using manipulation and interpretation of functions, curves, theorems, and problem types.

Financial Literacy & Consumer Math

Consumer Math is designed to help students use numerical operations as tools to reason and solve problems in real world situations. Students review arithmetic concepts, including place value as it relates to money, the four basic operations, and decimals. Students engage in applied, hands-on projects to apply concepts of money, supply and demand, probability, and statistics. They calculate fractions, decimals, percentages, and units of measurement and display information in graphs and charts. Students learn concepts related to banking, including checks, deposits and withdrawals, and maintaining a register.

Statistics

Topics include the measures of central tendency, standard deviation, combinations and permutations, probability, sampling, and various distributions. Emphasis is on applications of statistical concepts.

College Preparatory Mathematics

This course is designed to expose students to to prepare students to meet college entrance requirements. The course will cover the fundamental ideas of geometry, percentages, algebraic expressions and equations, functions, graphical representations, systems, exponential applications, probability, and statistics. There will be a focus on technological applications related to business, economics, and other social sciences.

WELLNESS

The Wellness curriculum includes physical education and health and emphasizes cooperation, conflict resolution, and the development of healthy habits for life. Instruction and activities focus on improving students' fine and gross motor skills in individual and team sports, overall physical fitness, teamwork and problem-solving, good sportsmanship, responsible personal and social behaviors, and understanding of how to establish a healthy lifestyle now and in the future.

Students participate in a wide variety of physical activities and learn about topics including: disease and injury prevention, first aid and CPR, drugs and alcohol, sex education, nutrition and healthy eating, accessing and critically evaluating health information from a variety of sources, and using information to make well-informed personal decisions that promote wellness while designing individual fitness plans.



SCIENCE

The MBS Science curriculum is structured to provide students with an opportunity to explore the natural world across a variety of topics. Instruction takes place in a dynamic, interactive classroom that emphasizes experiencing science first-hand through models, experiments, dissections, and exploration of the natural world.

Coding & Robotics

This course serves as an introduction to students to the use of computer programming to design and define their world. Besides being empowering and generating tenacity, confidence, and curiosity, successful completion of the course's objectives fosters the following invaluable life skills: creativity, collaboration; problem-solving; approximation; and iterative thinking. Students go beyond being consumers of content on the computer and become the creators.

Physical Science

The Physical Science course presents the important concepts and principles of physics with an emphasis on hands-on activities and experiments. Students begin by reviewing and applying the scientific method, and approach all physics topics through the lens of a scientist. Topics include velocity and acceleration, vectors, Newton's Laws of Motion, gravity, work, simple machines, sound, light, electricity, and magnetism.

Biology

The Biology course presents a comprehensive introduction to biological topics. Students begin by reviewing and applying the scientific method, and approach all biology topics through the lens of a scientist. The class includes hands-on topics including dissections and research projects. Topics include common characteristics of all living creatures, cells, evolution, classification of living things, genetics, animal science, photosynthesis, and ecology.

Chemistry

The Chemistry course explores the topics in more depth and utilizing more mathematical concepts. Students begin by reviewing and applying the scientific method, and approach all chemistry topics through the lens of a scientist. The emphasis is on problem-solving and applying concepts to every day life. Topics include matter and phases of matter, chemical and physical change, atomic structure, the Periodic Table, chemical bonding, chemical nomenclature, types of chemical reactions and equations, and scientific measurements and units.

Physics

The main objective of this course is to excite students about the wonders of science, while giving them the background to succeed in future science courses. Students will be expected to design and conduct experiments and devise projects. Students will be expected to participate in group activities, research topics, use some simple (and sometimes very sophisticated) tools to collect and analyze data, discuss results and interpret the observations they have made.

Environmental Studies

The Environmental Topics course examines the study of the environment through current events, observation of local surroundings, and exploration through laboratory experiments. Students will learn about natural life cycles, energy, the interconnectedness of maintaining a sustainable system, and the major effects of human activity and culture on the environment. A focus on inquiry-based learning will be emphasized within the course curriculum.

Anatomy & Physiology

* Prerequisites: Biology

Students will study the structures and functions of the human body. Essential for students interested in biological, medical, and health-oriented programs, such as nursing, medicine, and lab technology.

Agriculture

The Introduction to Agriculture course provides students with the opportunity to explore various aspects of the agricultural industry such as plant science, animal science, agriscience, and agribusiness.

SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

Social skill development is an integral part of the Middlebridge curriculum. We pride ourselves on being a relationship-based school and want all of our students to feel a sense of belonging to our school community and to the school at large. Social & Emotional Intelligence is a daily academic class for all Middlebridge students. Our Social & Emotional Intelligence specialists help students understand complex social interactions and give them the tools they need to successfully navigate social relationships. Each student has different social strengths and challenges. The Social & Emotional Intelligence curriculum is highly individualized, with consideration for a student's overall maturity, age, and sense of readiness to explore a variety of curriculum topics.

The Social & Emotional Intelligence curriculum covers students' social interactions, self-awareness, and self-advocacy. Classes utilize real-time feedback, role-playing, and self-reflection in order to improve students' social interactions, including both informal interactions with peers or adults and formal interactions with supervisors or professors. Students also work to increase their experience and insight into their own behaviors in postgraduate environments by exploring areas of interest, strengths, and challenges.

All Middlebridge School students are enrolled in at least one Social & Emotional Intelligence class per year. Unlike the other core academic classes, the Social & Emotional Intelligence curriculum is not set prior to the school year beginning. Social & Emotional Intelligence instructors work closely with the Academic and Residential Dean's Office to constantly assess and evaluate student's social skill development, their needs, and themes that may be developing on campus. Collaboratively as a school and with the student's family, new Social & Emotional Intelligence curriculum goals will be implemented on a 4-6 week basis. Each unit is designed to give students a supportive space in which to practice their communication development, understand and label feelings and emotions, and foster positive self-esteem. With instructor guidance, students will practice appropriately labeling and expressing their emotions, communicating effectively with their peers and adults, and understanding and identifying verbal and nonverbal expressions.

As students learn how to develop friendships, they will focus on accepting similarities and differences in others, as well as techniques related to emotional regulation. Additionally, through the process of self-exploration and career planning, students will learn how to match personal needs and expectations with satisfying career options.

The Social & Emotional Intelligence Program Addresses:

Emotions: Understanding their own and others' emotions; managing anger and stress; and developing empathy and self-esteem.

Communication & Perspective Taking: Improving conversational skills, including active listening skills; understanding body language, facial expressions, context and setting; and encouraging self-disclosure.

Self-Advocacy: Recognizing a need for help, learning to ask for help, and building awareness of academic and social support.

Learning Style: Understanding multiple intelligences, identifying learning styles, and recognizing academic and social impact of learning differences.

Relationships: Making friends and maintaining friendships; understanding boundaries and relationships; engaging in appropriate conversations; developing trust; and learning healthy dating behavior.

Social Media: Setting boundaries, understanding need for personal security, identifying appropriate use of social media, and determining whom to trust when sharing information, understanding cause and effect of posting personal information online.

Career Awareness and Exploration: Through the process of self-exploration and career planning and awareness activities, students will learn how to match personal values, interests, skill sets, and expectations with satisfying career options

The Post-Secondary Transition Process: Designed for seniors and/or Postgraduate students to help guide, support, and prepare them for post secondary placement. For more information, please refer to the Transition aspects of this handbook.

For more information regarding possible topics to be covered within the Social & Emotional Intelligence curriculum, please contact scallahan@middlebridgeschool.org.

HISTORY

The MBS History curriculum aims to develop students' abilities to think creatively and critically, while presenting facts to support an opinion. Accordingly, instruction emphasizes differentiating facts from opinions, predicting consequences, and recognizing recurring themes across different periods of time, cultures, and locations. Students analyze primary and secondary documents as they practice their research and writing skills. Courses include Early Civilization, Modern European History, World History, United States History, Civics, and advanced electives including Perspectives.

Early Civilizations

This course delves into the history of western civilization and begins with a study of early river civilizations. Students will cover topics such as Greece, Rome, the Middle Ages, the Renaissance, and the ages of Absolutism and Revolution. The course will conclude by looking at seeds of conflict and aspects of peace, while focusing on the cultural, political, geographical, and economic aspects of history. Students will improve their critical thinking and cartography skills, with a strong focus on the research process as they write essays and complete class presentations. Additionally, Early Civilizations will emphasize efficient note-taking procedures while promoting vocabulary, reading comprehension, and organization.

United States History

In United States History, students will learn about the early history of the United States to present day events and occurrences. Topics include the Age of Exploration, Colonial America, the causes, battles, and consequences of the Revolutionary War, The Constitution, Westward Expansion, Native Americans, Slavery, the Civil War, Reconstruction, the Industrial Revolution, World War I, The Great Depression, World War II, The Cold War, and current events that include globalization and terrorism. Students will study each topic through inquiry-based approaches, and will work to take on the perspective of people living during each event.

Modern European History

Modern European History is designed to provide students with a chronological and thematic survey of the development of Europe from 1800 to the present. The course

(cont.)

encourages students to build from one century to the next in understanding the relationships between the past and the present, as it exists in both Europe and the world today. The class provides the students with a basic narrative of the cultural, economic, political and social developments in Europe that played a fundamental role in shaping America's cultural heritage. Special emphasis will be placed upon the effect of economics in history, the emergence of the middle class, the rise of nationalism, the development of democratic governments in Britain and France, and the threat of Communism and rogue states to world unity. Students will also study the causes and consequences of events currently affecting Europe and the world.

Eastern History & Philosophy

Asia presents a series of varied historical and societal contexts. This is important because during recent years, issues of worldwide significance have focused on Asia such as the immense population problems, or the economic dynamism of the Asian region. This course will give an introduction to Asia covering China, Japan, Korea, and Vietnam. Diversity both between and within different Asian countries will be explored, as well as different reactions to the West. Through lectures, discussions, films, and other class activities, students will be able to survey the rich cultures of the East.

Civics

In Civics, students will gain an understanding of the historical circumstances surrounding the creation of the Constitution and the ratification process. Students will be able to identify the basic differences between the major forms of government. They will also learn to explore the challenges facing the global economy and various policy-making opportunities available to government to address these challenges. This course aims to provide students with opportunities to become engaged in the political process by acquiring the knowledge and practicing the skills necessary for active citizenship.

Perspectives

Perspectives is an advanced History elective unique to Middlebridge School, which is focused on an in-depth analysis of historical events and current global issues. Students study topics ranging from diplomatic relations between countries to human rights issues. As they research and analyze historical, geographic, and political science issues, they are guided to think critically about the information they gather and work to define their positions on each topic through written analysis and discussion. Using facts, theories, and concepts throughout history, students defend their positions by engaging in debates, writing essays, and giving speeches to their community. The course emphasizes supporting opinions with facts, articulating ideas clearly to others, questioning frames of reference, and taking new perspectives.

LANGUAGE TUTORIALS

Students attend either a 1:1 tutorial with a Language Specialist or a 2:1 with an Academic Coach every school day to address specific needs in decoding, spelling, morphology, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension, and written expression. Our Language Specialists provide explicit instruction informed by the Orton-Gillingham Approach. Orton-Gillingham is an individualized, multisensory, flexible, and systematic approach to develop proficiency in reading and writing and to support students to become independent learners.

Through tutorials, students gain an increased understanding of their own unique metacognitive style, their strengths and challenges, and improve their metacognition. Students are taught how and when to use specific executive functioning strategies. Students spend an additional time during Study Hall each day where they work independently to practice skills.

Tutorial Assessments

Informal, diagnostic assessments and inventories are conducted according to individual needs, training requirements, and/or program guidelines at the beginning, middle, and end of the year and submitted on a timely basis.

Skills Lab

Students spend an period of time each day in a supervised Study Hall working on Skills Lab assignments. The MBS Skills Lab is designed to complement the work of each student's individualized remedial program and to provide the opportunity for independent practice and reinforcement of skills and concepts learned in the tutorial setting.

1:1 Tutorials

Tutors support students with language-based learning differences in various ways. Here are some strategies that Middlebridge tutors use to help students:

- Identify student challenges: The tutor first identifies areas where the student struggles with the class work. They review the student's past assignments, tests, and quizzes, which helps the tutor to understand the student's learning needs and tailor their instruction accordingly.
- Create a plan of action: Once the tutor has identified areas of weakness, they can create a plan of action. This work may involve breaking down complex concepts into simpler parts, setting specific goals, and developing a timeline for achieving them.
- Provide personalized instruction: Tutors provide customized instruction to students using different teaching techniques that suit the student's learning styles. This differentiation may involve using visual aids, hands-on activities, and real-life examples to explain concepts.
- Encourage active learning: Tutors encourage students to actively participate in their learning process. It involves asking questions, practicing problems, and summarizing key concepts.
- Provide constructive feedback: Tutors provide constructive feedback to students by identifying areas of strength and areas that need improvement. Therefore, students work to understand their progress and determine where to focus their efforts.
- Foster a positive learning environment: Tutors create a positive learning environment where students feel comfortable asking questions and making mistakes. Students become more confident in their abilities, encouraging them to take risks in their learning.

ACADEMIC COACHING

As underclassmen become seniors, they begin to take college classes. In small 2:1 settings, the Academic Coach is flexible and intentional regarding pacing, assignments, and instruction. This can be especially helpful for seniors with unique schedules or needs as they prepare for graduation and beyond.

The Academic Coach works with students to set realistic academic and personal goals with their college classes and helps them develop a plan to achieve them. College requires students to manage their time effectively to balance academic, extracurricular, and social activities. An academic coach can help students develop time management skills and create a schedule that works for them. College-level coursework also often requires more independent learning and critical thinking skills than high school. Our academic coaches help their students develop practical study skills, such as note-taking, time management, and test-taking strategies. They also provide support, such as essay editing and academic policies and requirements guidance.



EXTRA-CURRICULAR OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDY SKILLS

Study Hall

Study Halls provide the opportunity for students to improve their ability to work independently and to reinforce skills and concepts learned that day in classes. Study Hall is when students work on assignments from the rest of their academic classes. Academic staff serves as proctors and are available to address student concerns, provide additional resources, and positively reinforce students as they work through individual assignments. Students are expected to arrive on time and prepared, use their time appropriately and effectively, complete assignments with care and attention to detail, and work for the entirety of the period.

Learning Lab

The goal of Learning Lab is to provide additional support and instruction in the areas of study skills and metacognitive learning strategies. Learning Lab is voluntary, and offered Monday-Thursday during students' elective program for additional support in completing homework assignments. During these sessions, students also organize their materials, study for tests, and conduct research.



EDUCATION IS NOT
PREPARATION FOR LIFE;

EDUCATION IS
LIFE ITSELF.

—JOHN DEWEY



LEARNING SEMINARS

MBS Learning Seminars are a series of seminars and workshops that are held periodically throughout the duration of the academic year. Each learning seminar is led by an administrative staff member at Middlebridge, and are designed to teach students to develop intellectual curiosity and metacognitive knowledge that they can utilize independently within their content-area classes.

SEMINARS AT MBS

At Middlebridge, we celebrate our student's strengths, support their academic and personal growth, and encourage them to become self aware and independent learners. As a community, one of the values we hold most dear is our sense of belonging and becoming. Each student's path to Middlebridge is unique. This journey often requires our students to reflect, acknowledge, and embrace who they have been, who they are, and who they want to be as they strive to take ownership over their educational process. As we work to provide instruction, opportunities, and support for students with learning differences, we also look outside of the academic classroom, as we draw on our leadership team's experience to help instill some of these foundational and higher level skills on our students.

The rotating MBS learning seminars can cover topics including, but not limited to:

- **Problem-solving, Metacognition, and Critical Thinking**
- **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion**
- **Collaboration and Leadership**
- **Career Exploration**
- **Initiative and Entrepreneurship**
- **Flexibility and Self-Advocacy**

Each seminar is predicated on a foundation of trust, positive attitude, inquiry, and evaluation.

MBS STUDY SKILL WORKSHOPS

MBS Study Skill workshops teach students positive self-efficacy by utilizing the adaptation of self-regulatory learning within content-area disciplines. Each daily workshop will introduce a study skills strategy, describe how it works to students, generalize and contextualize the skill, and provide practice opportunities for students to engage in. By exposing students to a variety of different strategies, skills and modalities, students just be provided with an opportunity to reflect on and evaluate the skills they have learned. They will then apply these learned strategies to their academic curriculum.

Periodically throughout the school year, students may be chosen to participate in the seminars and workshops dependent on need. Students may be grouped by their age, cognitive profile, and/or years at Middlebridge School.

In summation, MBS Learning Seminars and MBS Study Skills Workshops were created to compliment and reinforce content, skills, and community values taught both in and out of the Middlebridge classroom.



LIGHTHOUSE PROGRAM

At Middlebridge, we take our responsibility to help prepare our students for life after graduation seriously. The Lighthouse internship and career exploration program provides students with opportunities to learn about the working world and to develop job-related skills.

The Lighthouse program is a comprehensive curriculum that includes instruction, self-evaluation, and hands-on experiences that prime students for a successful transition to adulthood. The Lighthouse Program curriculum is carefully integrated across all aspects of the Middlebridge program, including classroom instruction during Social Pragmatics, and internship and job shadow opportunities during elective programming.

Students in all grades participate in classroom learning. Job shadows are available to students in all grades, while internships are primarily reserved for juniors and seniors. The Lighthouse program is comprised of four integrated components: Career Awareness, Self-Discovery, Occupational Training and Job Skills, and Career Exploration.

Career Awareness: Students learn about the world of work in classes that introduce students to a broad range of career options, and provide an opportunity to learn about particular jobs that may be of interest.

Self-Discovery: Students gain insight by exploring and documenting their personality types, learning styles, areas of interest, strengths, and challenges.

Occupational Training and Job Skills: Students develop essential job skills to obtain and maintain employment, learning about employer expectations and the social graces and personal habits it takes to be a good employee.

Career Exploration: Students participate in job shadows and internships to become more knowledgeable about career choices and gain practical skills, transferring their classroom knowledge to off campus experiences.

STANDARDIZED TESTING GUIDELINES

PSAT, SAT I, and ACT

Students who are interested in pursuing a post-secondary college or program should be prepared to take the SAT I – Scholastic Aptitude Test, and/or the ACT – American College Test. Students can begin to take these tests at any age, but MBS feels that the student should refrain from taking the exam until they are at least a Junior in high school.

The MBS student usually has a long history (sometimes anxiety producing) of participating in standardized testing, and it is essential that our students are prepared for the exam both academically and emotionally. To familiarize our students with the exam format and questions, MBS offers both SAT and ACT tutorials. These sessions are 1:1 and allow our students the opportunity to learn valuable test taking strategies, reduce test anxiety, identify areas of strength and weakness, and practice test sections. Although ACT/SAT tutoring is not required, our students have benefited greatly in the past from these sessions. *Please contact the Dan Leventhal or Sara Callahan if you are interested in your student receiving additional ACT/SAT tutoring.*

While many high school students choose to take the PSAT, MBS does not offer the PSAT. Instead, we encourage our students to prepare for the SAT/ACT by taking practice exams and familiarizing themselves with the exam in tutorial.

Nearly all colleges will accept either the ACT or the SAT. Depending upon the student's learning difference and academic ability, they may test better on the SAT or the ACT. MBS will assist in determining which test your child may do best on through practice tests and exercises. Ultimately, it is your decision which test will be taken. We encourage you to research the testing requirements for the schools you are interested in to ensure that they do not recommend one test over the other.

The cost for these exams increases every year. The enrollment fee is usually between \$75.00-\$85.00 for each exam. Students will have the opportunity to test two to four times per year for the SAT or ACT. All scheduled test dates will be communicated to parents in the beginning of the school year and will be available upon request. Registration for the test needs to be completed several months ahead of time. Scores for these tests usually post in approximately one month.

Accommodations

Depending upon the student's documented learning disability, each student may qualify for different test accommodations. To be eligible for testing accommodations, students must have current documentation of their learning disability by means of a current Neuropsychological or Psychoeducational report. We strongly encourage parents to complete the testing registration several months ahead of time to ensure that your child qualifies for testing accommodations.

Neuropsychological and Psychoeducational Requirements:

- For the ACT, the report must be no older than 3 years.
- For the SAT, the report must be no older than 5 years.

Below is a list of accommodations that may be available to our students:

- Private testing room
- Having the test read orally
- Extended testing time
- Enlarged font
- Testing on multiple days

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the Academic Dean.

TRANSITION PROGRAM

Introduction

Transition is the process of change from one environment or time period to another. For students graduating from high school, transition represents the bridge between dependence and independence. The departure from high school is a significant milestone in not just the life of the student, but the life of their family as well. For a student with a learning difference, transition often coincides with various challenges that require guidance and assistance from educators and family in order to successfully navigate these new challenges.

The transition to college can be stressful. Students are leaving behind their friends, family, and the safety and support of their school. Students will have to adjust to a new school, explore a new place, make new friends, and learn new skills. This transition is not only stressful for the student, but for parents as well. Parents have to be able to work through a variety of emotions and possible decisions in order to assist their child in choosing a direction that is best for his or her overall well-being and longevity.

One of the most important aspects of the transition process is trying to find a “next step” that optimizes the student’s ability to experience and achieve success while working towards his or her post secondary goals. Whether it is a two or four year college, a technical program, a life skills program, a post graduate year, or employment, parents and students need to be able to honestly and accurately assess each student’s academic, social, and emotional maturity. Parents and students need to be aware of the student’s strengths and weaknesses, sense of readiness, and the level support they may need to be successful.

While the transition process can be stressful, the post secondary journey can also be exhilarating, inspirational, and fun for the student. To make this process as positive as possible, it is essential that there is Communication, Collaboration, and a Student Sense of Ownership. Parents, students, and Middlebridge need to work together effectively, and work towards a common goal. The transition process should be empowering for the student, and should engender each student with a feeling of accomplishment and control over their education and future.

Please do not hesitate to contact Middlebridge School if you have any questions or if you would like to set up a consultation.

Heather Jensen

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TRANSITIONS CLASSES AND THE MIDDEBRIDGE TRANSITION SEMINARS

Every student at Middlebridge School participates in Social & Emotional Intelligence classes. For seniors and postgraduate students, the Social & Emotional Intelligence curriculum centers on the transition to college or a postgraduate setting of their choice. In this transition-focused course, students will identify, research, visit/tour, apply, and eventually commit to attending a school or program that they feel is the best fit for them. Students will complete their college applications and required essays, gather recommendations, and produce other supplemental materials required for college or program admittance.

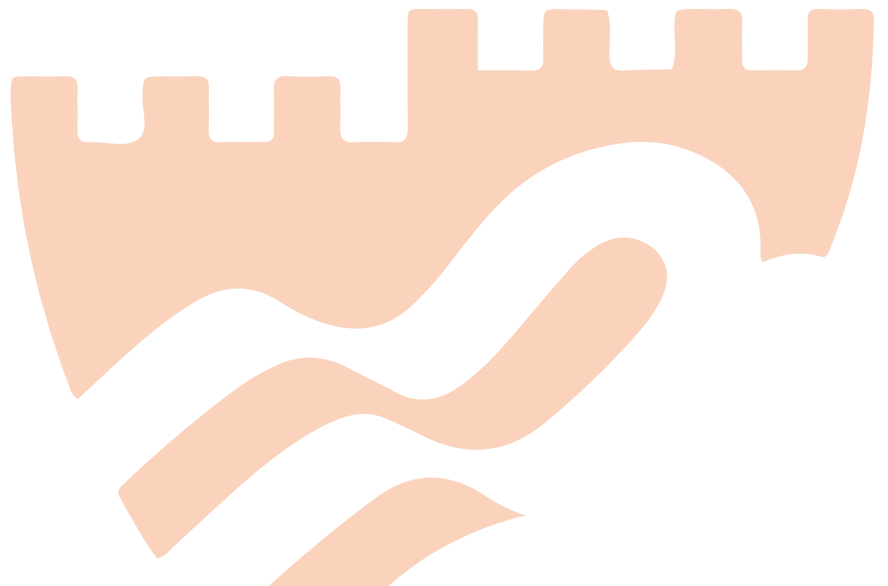
In order to better prepare our students for the transition process that lies ahead, MBS offers a transition seminar for juniors or seniors who will be returning for their PG year at MBS. This seminar will consist of ten 30-minute sessions.

By the end of the transition seminar, students will have begun the following:

- **Increase their awareness of the different types of colleges and programs available to them**
- **Familiarize themselves with transition vocabulary**
- **Identify the support they receive at Middlebridge School and what they may need at the post secondary level**
- **Evaluate and discuss their academic resume and begin to set academic and residential goals for their senior year**
- **Outline the possible demographics of schools/programs they may attend**
- **Outline the types of programs that could be an appropriate match for them**
- **Gain an understanding of the application process**



It is our goal at Middlebridge to provide resources and support to better prepare our students for the transition from Middlebridge School. We feel that by starting this process during a students' junior year, they will have a greater understanding of how their senior year and college application process will look. It is our goal at Middlebridge to provide resources and support to better prepare our students for the transition from Middlebridge School. We feel that by starting this process during a students' junior year, they will have a greater understanding of how their senior year and college application process will look.





COLLEGE CLASS EXPERIENCE

A college class provides our students with the opportunity to generalize many of their study skills and learning strategies to a new academic environment while continuing to receive support and guidance from MBS staff.

Students are exposed to college skills such as: navigating a college syllabus, taking notes within a college lecture, preparing for mid terms and cumulative tests, keeping up with weekly readings, learning how to break down weekly and monthly assignments, registering for learning accommodations, and familiarizing oneself with the self advocacy and communication skills needed at the college level. Students are encouraged to develop a relationship with their professor and peers, and to take a high level of responsibility for their performance.

Over the years, MBS juniors and seniors have taken a diverse range of courses at the local colleges. Courses high school students have been enrolled in include, but are not limited to: Psychology, English Literature, College Writing, Theater, Mathematics, Business, College Success, Communications, and Foreign Language.

Middlebridge School will complete a CCRI High School Enrichment Application for your child. Students will be expected to meet both their academic and residential responsibilities while enrolled in the college class. During elective time, students will be required to attend a proctored study hall and support session focused primarily around their college class curriculum and syllabus. Students will use this time to work on their college assignments, seek out support, ask class related questions, and work collaboratively with their peers. Students may also use time in the evening and on weekends to work on their weekly assignments.

Students may choose to enroll in additional college classes offered either through the Community College of Rhode Island (CCRI) or at the University of Rhode Island (URI). Classes must be preapproved by the Academic Dean.





MIDDLEBRIDGE SCHOOL



and



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