



2024-2025 Middle School Course Catalog

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WORCESTER ACADEMY

ACHIEVE THE HONORABLE

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WORCESTER ACADEMY GUIDING STATEMENTS

MISSION STATEMENT

Worcester Academy exists to instill in its students the desire to learn throughout life, to engage passionately with the world around them, and to be honorable persons of strong and resourceful character.

CORE VALUES

We are a community – curious, thoughtful, generous, and thriving in our diversity. We embrace each of our core values as essential to the mission of Worcester Academy and as testimony of our beliefs and commitments.

HONOR Integrity, honesty, respect, fairness, and responsibility inform our actions and beliefs. These attributes are the foundations for “Achieving the Honorable” in both our public and private lives.

RESPECT We believe in the inherent worth of every person, celebrating difference in a community rich with diverse gifts and talents. We seek commonality in our relationships regardless of title, background, or individual abilities and challenges. We also accept responsibility for sustaining the world around us, from the campus to the global environment.

COMMUNITY The act of learning brings all members of this community together. We share a belief in the importance of serving others through both leadership and generosity. A respectful and compassionate approach to citizenship guides our actions on this campus and in the wider world.

PERSONAL GROWTH Personal growth may be measured in many ways; the most authentic, however, is when we are true to ourselves. We seek to fulfill our potential by building habits of mind and body that promote growth in knowledge and understanding, ability and confidence, poise and leadership. By doing so, we nurture a desire for life-long learning and a commitment to excellence in all phases of life.

CHALLENGE Attaining excellence in a changing global environment requires adaptability, creativity, and intellectual courage. We seek relevance in our work, and provide a rigorous yet nurturing environment in which we all may thrive. We value hard work and the disciplined application of knowledge and skills in our learning and institutional practices.

COMMITMENT TO EQUITY AND INCLUSION

Worcester Academy celebrates the individual and collective diversity of our School community and respects, affirms, and protects the dignity and worth of each person in it. Our commitments are reflected in our mission and core values, in our curriculum, and in the policies, programs, and practices of the School. Given the long history of systems of oppression in the communities that Worcester Academy students, faculty, and alumni navigate, we must reconcile this, and prioritize thoughtful, supportive engagement of the lived experiences of individuals. Additionally, we will work to eliminate all oppressive language and practices that target any identity and lived experience.

- We strive to create accountability for diversity, equity, and inclusion and cross-cultural humility, in our learning community and beyond.
- We strive for life-long learning that elevates diverse interests and perspectives and engagement as global citizens.
- We strive for empathetic leadership, and making equitable and honorable decisions.

Approved by Board of Trustees, March 2021

LEARNING PRINCIPLES

Learning is enhanced when students...

- find interest and meaning in what they are learning through connecting learning to context and allowing for real world application.
- recognize that effort, focus, and hard work yield growth.
- connect new information to prior knowledge and use it multiple times in varied ways over time.
- are intrinsically motivated to learn, have autonomy, and take ownership of the process.
- engage with timely, actionable, and constructive feedback prompting them to reflect on and revise their work.
- are physically and mentally healthy, prepared to learn and in an environment that is safe and inclusive. Students learn best when they belong to a community that practices cultural competence.
- collaborate. Social interactions result in deeper processing and the construction of knowledge.
- use higher level thinking skills to think critically about, reflect upon, and transfer their learning.
- are instructed utilizing a variety of teaching strategies that combine content knowledge with skills development.

PORTRAIT OF A LEARNER

Worcester Academy believes that we are a community of learners, that learning takes place in and outside the classroom, and that it is through the act of learning that we build and create community.

All learners at Worcester Academy:

- are independent learners who ask questions, engage in critical and creative thinking, and use a variety of problem solving skills.
- embrace a growth mindset, understand their personal learning styles, and engage in lifelong learning.
- continually develop and practice the cultural competencies needed to expand their social and professional relationships in a diverse world.
- actively collaborate and engage as both leader and member of a team.
- practice effective and interactive communication; and
- apply their knowledge, skills, and competencies to the world beyond the classroom.



WORCESTER ACADEMY

ACHIEVE THE HONORABLE

LEARNING PHILOSOPHY

MISSION

The Worcester Academy Mission is

Worcester Academy exists to instill in its students the desire to learn throughout life, to engage passionately with the world around them, and to be honorable persons of strong and resourceful character.

PORTRAIT

And work to develop learners who are

Independent
Culturally competent
Communicators
Life-long learners

PRINCIPLES

We know that learning is enhanced when it encourages

- Meaning
- Growth Mindset
- Autonomy
- Feedback
- Safety & Inclusion
- Collaboration
- Critical Thinking

DEFINITION

We define learning as

We believe that learning is a process of practice and reflection driven by finding purpose and relevance in the experience. This process leads a learner to grow in their ability to acquire and apply knowledge and skills.

PROGRAM

Therefore we offer a robust learning program

- Academics
- Arts
- Athletics
- Service
- Activities
- Urban Engagement
- Social & Emotional Learning

MIDDLE SCHOOL COURSE OF STUDY

Department		Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8
ENGLISH		English 6	English 7	English 8
WORLD LANGUAGE				
	Latin	n/a	Latin A Latin B	Latin A Latin B
	French	n/a	French A French B	French A French B
	Spanish	n/a	Spanish A Spanish B	Spanish A Spanish B
MATHEMATICS		Mathematics 6	PreAlgebra Algebra I*	PreAlgebra Foundations of Algebra Algebra I Upper School Geometry*
COMPUTER SCIENCE		Computer Science 6	Computer Science 7	Computer Science 8
SCIENCE		Science 6	Science 7	Science 8
HISTORY & SOCIAL SCIENCES		Social Studies	American Studies	Global Studies
VISUAL & PERFORMING ARTS		Arts 6 Rotations: Visual, Theater, Music	Arts 7 Rotations: Visual, Theater, Music	Arts Choices (2): Visual Art 8 Theater 8 Instrumental Music 8 Vocal Music 8
PHYSICAL EDUCATION		Physical Education 6 Health	Physical Education 7 Health	Physical Education 8 Heath
SOCIAL / EMOTIONAL LEARNING		Advisory 6	Advisory 7	Advisory 8

*Indicates that a course has prerequisites for enrollment. We ask you to review these prerequisites and contact the Mathematics Department with questions.

**Students may be placed in an Upper School Math or World Language course after review of a completed placement test.

COURSE DESCRIPTIONS 2024-2025

WORLD LANGUAGE DEPARTMENT

The World Language Department in the Middle School marks the beginning of a student's formal study of language. All languages teach students fundamental communication skills. Emphasis is placed on reading, writing, speaking and listening. All students will also learn how to collaborate, communicate, and learn about cultures that differ from their own. Language courses are broken into Level A, the beginning of language study, and Level B, the completion of content necessary to advance to Upper School courses. By the end of Level B, students are prepared to enter Upper School Level 2 language. By spreading the content over two years, we allow students to explore the languages and cultures more deeply. We also allow them time to master the transferable skills of note-taking, memorization, public speaking, critical thinking, and analysis. Students will be assessed in multiple ways: project-based learning, written and oral presentations, coursework, quizzes, and tests.

French

- **French A:** French A introduces students to French through classroom vocabulary, present tense regular verbs, and the verbs to be, to have, to do, and to go. They learn the basics of conversation and how to describe their days and families. French A ends with a study of food vocabulary and food culture around the francophone world. Students will use videos, worksheets, board work, and games to practice using the language by writing, reading, speaking, and listening. They will be assessed through videos, presentations, written and spoken quizzes, and unit tests. Each unit will be scaffolded with study skills lessons that teach them how to prepare for the many assessments they will complete for the rest of their French careers.
- **French B:** French B reviews the regular tense verbs, four building-block irregulars, and the vocabulary from French A. Students are then introduced to irregular verbs in the present tense and double their French vocabulary. French phonetics are introduced to help students master their speaking skills and spelling. The end of the year introduces the passé composé. Students will take an Upper School French 1 final to ensure they are prepared for Upper School French 2.

Spanish

- **Spanish A:** Spanish A this course offers the first half of a Level One program in Spanish. Spanish A focuses on the four key areas of foreign language learning: listening, reading, speaking and writing. Basic language patterns, grammar concepts and vocabulary are presented and practiced again and again. Changing word and verb forms, pronouns, and idiomatic phrases particular to Spanish are introduced. Cultural information is presented in the form of films, videos, as well as by the written word. In-class quizzes and tests, coursework, and oral proficiency developed through the performance of projects, skits

are part of the evaluation process and provide ongoing practice and reinforcement of basic language skills. At the same time, the class will provide opportunities to gain cultural awareness.

- **Spanish B:** Spanish B continues and completes the first level of Spanish, and the goal in this class is to develop communication skills in speaking, listening, reading, and writing to a basic level of proficiency in the target language. Students will be able to communicate ideas in Spanish in the present tense and by the end of this course, students will be introduced to the past tense. The class will provide opportunities to gain cultural awareness in the form of films, videos, as well as by the written word. In-class quizzes and tests, coursework, and oral proficiency developed through the performance of projects, skits are part of the evaluation process and provide ongoing practice and reinforcement of basic language skills.

Latin

- **Latin A:** Latin A marks the beginning of a student's study of Latin. Students are introduced to fundamental grammatical structures, including 1st and 2nd Declension nouns and adjectives and 1st conjugation verbs in the present tense, and are presented and practiced repeatedly. In addition, they will develop an understanding and appreciation of Latin vocabulary (including spelling) and will be able to recognize derivatives and cognates. To round out their experience, students complete lessons that encourage them to develop an understanding of classical history and culture as well as an understanding of and appreciation for the fundamentals of classical mythology. Each unit will be scaffolded with study skills lessons that teach them how to prepare for the many assessments they will complete. In-class activities, quizzes, projects, tests, and translations are all part of the evaluation process. The course concludes in the spring with a final examination.
- **Latin B:** Latin B is a course that not only continues and completes the first level of Latin study, but also emphasizes the importance of study skills. Through various activities involving reading, translating, and structural analysis of the target language, students will continue refining skills addressed in Latin A and strengthen their mastery of fundamental grammatical structures and understanding and appreciation of Latin vocabulary (including spelling). Students will be more familiar with derivatives as well. In addition, students will deepen their knowledge of classical mythology, history, and culture. Each unit is scaffolded with study skills lessons that are crucial in guiding students to examine, analyze, and translate the writings of classical Latin authors. In-class activities, quizzes, projects, tests, and translations are all part of the evaluation process. The course concludes in the spring with a final examination.

ENGLISH DEPARTMENT

In the English department, we want students to foster an appreciation for literature and writing. Therefore, our classes focus on the following skills: reading comprehension, literary analysis, writing, grammar, vocabulary, presentation, discussion, and organization. Students work in these areas by engaging in class literature studies and independent reading. Students are expected to read each night for homework and will track their independent reading and give class book talks throughout all three years. Writing lessons focus on various topics, genres, and conventions. Various tasks are utilized to assess each student's progress, including papers, reading quizzes, book talks, and oral participation during class discussions.

- **English 6:** During this course, students build the foundation for strong reading, writing, and analytical skills. They will complete a research project and have several opportunities to engage with creative writing. They will also have an alumni pen pal with whom they exchange letters throughout the school year. Students will read four novels this year and engage in novel study units.
- **English 7:** Students will build off of their reading and writing skills and continue their independent reading. This course has a strong focus on interdisciplinary units that align with American Studies. They learn about periods in American history and then read texts in English which bring these periods to life through memoir, autobiography, and historical fiction. This includes the revolutionary war, civil rights, and the refugee experience.
- **English 8:** Reading expectations increase in 8th grade as students tackle more profound literary texts of historical fiction, memoir, and fiction. They will continue to practice creative writing this year. Also, students complete a research paper connected to a historical period to further develop their interdisciplinary understandings. 8th grade culminates in a public speaking unit in which students deliver a S.T.O.R.Y. talk (Sharing the Truth of Real Youth) in front of their peers and parents. It is a wonderful celebration of three years of English and Middle School experiences.

MATHEMATICS DEPARTMENT

Middle school is a critical time for students to develop a positive attitude about math. Our goal is to teach students the concepts, skills and computational fluency required to be competent mathematicians. We give our students insight into how to use the math skills they are learning in everyday life through hands-on projects, real-life problems and implementing challenges. Our students learn to connect abstract thinking with logical reasoning and problem solving. Our students have the opportunity to revise their work which further helps them to understand their mistakes, gives them an opportunity to see how mistake making is a natural part of the learning process. Math units will also include quizzes and tests.

- **Math 6:** Math 6 provides a review of basic facts and operations and aims to bring students of varying backgrounds to proficiency in the four basic operations. The course aims to build strong computational and problem-solving skills and to give students opportunities to express mathematical thinking orally and in writing. A variety of projects are completed which focus on math in everyday life. Estimation, mental math, and calculator use are addressed through projects and activities. Topics studied include: geometry, rational numbers, ratios, introduction to algebra, decimal numbers and operations, fraction operations, negative numbers operations, and probability.
- **Math 7:** Math 7 extends the study of numbers to include integers and real numbers. This course also introduces equation solving, graphing on the number line and the coordinate plane, and simple probability and statistics. Geometric concepts of congruence, area and volume, similarity, and circles are presented.
- **Math 8 :** Math 8 is designed to provide students with a strong understanding of algebraic concepts and techniques. This course covers the fundamental principles of algebra, including solving equations, graphing linear functions, solving systems of equations and simplifying exponential expressions. Students will develop their algebraic problem-solving skills and gain confidence in using algebraic methods to solve real-world problems. By the end of the course, students will have a solid foundation in algebraic concepts and techniques, and will be well-prepared for a full year Algebra I course.
- **Algebra I:** Algebra I includes the study of the properties of the real number system, solving equations using one variable, learning methods to solve systems of two variables, solving and graphing inequalities, and factoring and manipulating polynomials. It also includes the study of rational and radical expressions as well as exponents. Students learn to solve quadratic functions. Graphing linear, quadratic, and absolute value functions will be explored to help students further understand the math concepts they are learning. In each unit, students will learn to apply algebraic concepts to real world problems.

Placement Process

6th grade:

- 6th graders with an A or above are invited to take a placement test to skip Math 7/8 and go straight to Algebra I. The test is designed to see if they already can complete Pre-Algebra math problems that have not yet been taught in the WA curriculum.
 - They must score a 70% or above to be placed into Algebra I.
 - If they score between 60-70% they may be placed into Algebra I with a teacher recommendation. Teachers recommend students in this group to be accelerated if they show strong independent learning and self-management skills.

7th grade:

- All 7th graders in Math 7 are invited to take a placement test to skip Math 8 and go to Algebra I. The test is designed to see if they have the foundational skills needed to be successful in Algebra I. They may only take this placement test once in the spring; there are no re-takes after the summer break.
 - They must score a 70% or above to be placed into Algebra I.
 - If they score between a 60-70% they may be placed into Algebra I with a teacher recommendation. Teachers recommend students in this group to be accelerated if they show strong independent learning and self-management skills.
- Any 7th grade students enrolled in Algebra I will take Upper School Geometry or Algebra II during their 8th grade year.
- After the school year has begun until early October, a teacher may propose to the student/family that the student would be better placed in a different math class. Movements like this are exclusively proposed by the teacher.

8th grade:

- 8th graders in Math 8 will go on to take Algebra I in the Upper School. Their placement in regular or Honors will be based on teacher recommendation.
- 8th graders in Algebra I go on to take either Geometry or Algebra II in the Upper School. These accelerated students typically defer into Honors math but regular level is also available should it be preferred.

COMPUTER SCIENCE DEPARTMENT

The world needs more computer scientists from diverse backgrounds and experiences. While not all of our students will pursue careers in computer science, we recognize that technology and programming influence a wide array of professions globally, from farming to aerospace; this is why Computer Science is a required class from 6-8 and is pass/fail. Through the Middle School Computer Science program, students engage with various applications, experiences, and projects, aiming to inspire enthusiasm for technology, coding, design, and engineering. Each class builds on prior knowledge, developing students into independent thinkers, collaborators, and innovators.

- **Computer Science 6:** Computer Science students in the sixth grade will become familiar with the fundamental elements of computer programming. Students will practice reading and writing code in both block and written coding environments. In addition to coding, students will also be introduced to a number of other computer science, technology, and Engineering topics such as design of digital graphics, 3D modeling and printing, simple circuits, and other features of the Innovation Lab. Students will have the opportunity within this class to review and practice other academic technology skills important for their success in the WA Middle School such as familiarity with Google suites and typing skills.

- **Computer Science 7:** Computer Science students in the seventh grade will learn to program with JavaScript with an emphasis on the fundamental elements of computer programming such as loops, variables, conditional statements, and functions. Upon completion of this course, students will be able to compare and contrast the fundamental elements in block and written code, read, write, and debug code of their own design.
- **Computer Science 8:** The primary focus of Computer Science 8 will build upon their prior experience to dive deeper into the foundational elements of programming, digital design and Engineering, taking advantage of the tools available in the Innovation Lab. Students will also learn about the history of the personal computer and discuss the ethical and moral dilemmas associated with advances in Artificial Intelligence. Upon completion of this course, students will be able to identify which areas of Computer Science are of most interest to them, and be able to independently create projects in the lab so they are equipped to use those tools as they progress into the Upper School.

SCIENCE DEPARTMENT

In middle school science, we aim to provide students with a strong foundational understanding of key science concepts that they can apply to their understanding of the world around them as well as in future science courses. To achieve this goal, we use a spiraling curriculum that enables students to explore each discipline (physical, life and earth sciences) of science each year, deepening their comprehension and adding complexity each time they revisit a concept or topic. Through inquiry-based and experiential coursework, students find meaning in their learning by applying their thinking to novel and real-world scenarios. In addition to content, students are continuously practicing and refining their science skills of observation, data analysis, critical thinking and science communication. Class activities require students to work independently, collaborate with peers and exercise problem solving skills. The methods of assessment include lab reports, projects, quizzes and in-class investigation and activities.

- **Science 6:** Students explore physical science through various investigations of energy and energy transfer: thermal, light and sound. One of their first projects requires students to apply their understanding of heat transfer to design and construct insulators in an effort to keep a cup of water the hottest for 30 minutes. Students learn about earth science through a brief unit about our solar system before diving into a deep investigation of our earth processes including an exploration of plate tectonics. Finally, students learn about life science by learning about cells and the body.
- **Science 7:** Students build on the foundations of scientific concepts laid down in the previous year. They practice safety in science, science process skills, data gathering, analysis and reporting of data through CER conclusions. Students begin by observing phenomena and developing questions to drive their learning of chemical reactions. Through a case study analysis, they participate in labs to grow their understanding of

metabolic reactions, and they experiment to learn the science concepts of motion and energy. Other units of study include weather and climate, and energy transfer in ecosystems.

- **Science 8:** Students are challenged to apply their foundational science knowledge from 6 and 7. From the interdisciplinary Global Climate Summit to creating a choose-your-own adventure story of a carbon atom, students creatively and thoroughly explore real-world science concepts through authentic and meaningful projects and assessments. Units of study include chemical reactions, forces, matter cycling, earth's resources and human impact, genetics and heredity.

HISTORY AND SOCIAL SCIENCES DEPARTMENT

In Social Studies, American History, and Global Studies, students develop as global citizens by building skills of inquiry, collaboration, analysis, and communication. Within each grade level, students act as historians through analytical writing, oral presentations, seminar discussions, debates, and creative projects. Teaching practices prepare students to become leaders in our changing world by highlighting student voice, independence, and empowerment.

- **Social Studies 6:** In Social Studies, students explore the origins of the modern world and develop their historical understandings of place, time, and global interactions. Interdisciplinary opportunities in each unit allow students to discover connections between history and the world around them and their role in it. The course focuses on moments of world transformation, and areas of study include the Neolithic Revolution, rise and fall of ancient empires, world religions, and the Middle Ages.
- **American History 7:** The American Studies class incorporates a thematic approach to the history of the United States, with a focus on helping students find relevance to their own lives in the topics they study. Several units include interdisciplinary activities with other 7th grade classes. Content includes the history of Indigenous People in the North America, from the pre-Columbian era through today's headlines, the creation of the United States government and laws, the spread of slavery, the Civil War, Reconstruction and the Civil Rights movement, the Women's Rights movement, and the United States as a world power. Students are asked to think critically about history and practice writing a thesis statement, and to analyze primary sources and secondary sources to support their arguments. There is a focus on research and written and oral communication in the form of papers, debates, seminars, and oral presentations.
- **Global Studies 8:** In Global Studies, students explore their role in the world through the lens of change and systems. Interdisciplinary learning serves as a foundation to the class, and experiences like the Global Climate Summit provide an opportunity for students to find their voice and place in contemporary issues. Throughout the course, students will develop their skills through units that address nation building and introductory political

philosophy, climate change and climate action, the development of the modern world, World War II and the Holocaust, and colonialism and independence movements.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS DEPARTMENT

The middle school arts classes focus on giving all students exposure to a breadth of artistic experiences, as well as the key human principles of ensembleship, creative problem-solving, autonomy, risk-taking, and reflection. In 6th and 7th grades, students approach the arts from all angles in each class, regardless of previous experience or familiarity with the subject. This exposure fuels and informs their choice as 8th graders to specialize in two areas of study. We both welcome and challenge newcomers and art-lovers alike to music-making, artistic self-expression, and theatrical performance during their careers as middle school students, and encourage connection between their art and the world beyond school through field trips and hands-on experience.

Arts 6

- Music 6 - Students begin their music-making journey by building a foundation of music literacy skills. Students then apply these skills in an ensemble setting by choosing a wind or percussion instrument to learn (or continuing a wind, percussion, or string instrument they have previously learned), as well as through participation in a vocal ensemble. The class emphasizes the importance of practice, independent learning, collaboration, and personal growth as students rehearse in class and complete outside of class practice assignments in order to prepare for an annual Spring Music Recital.
- Theater 6 - Students explore the concepts of ensemble and the origins of Ancient Greek Theater with a semester-long project called “Mythology Madness.” The project involves hands-on creative components as well as performance, and challenges them to produce, design, and perform Greek mythology plays using modern theatrical design tools and skills.
- Visual Art 6 - Students begin their Worcester Academy journey by tackling the essential questions: Who Am I? How can I express my identity through my artwork? Taking inspiration from the city’s public art, students express the theme of personal identity using a variety of media and techniques.

Arts 7

- Music 7 - As a continuation of Music 6, students work to further build their music literacy skills with work on more advanced notation and rhythm reading. As they keep learning the instruments selected in 6th grade and with their vocal ensemble, students are encouraged to focus on independence of playing/singing in class with continued emphasis on practice, collaboration, and personal growth as we work to prepare more challenging music for an annual Spring Music Recital.

- Theater 7 - Students are given a chance to explore imagination-based performance with improvisational theater lessons in the style of Viola Spolin’s Second City, and create a final improv show to perform as a group.
- Visual Art 7 - Students are given a hands-on introduction to the elements and principles of design as they expand the theme of personal identity to include “Where did I come from? How has my ancestry impacted my identity? Included are projects inspired by American artists who have explored this theme in their artwork.

Arts 8

- Music 8 - Students are encouraged to further develop their music knowledge introduced in Music 6 and 7 and fosters creative expression through performance with the Upper School choir or instrumental ensemble, as well as through reflection, composition, and analysis of a variety of musical genres. Emphasis is placed on a more in-depth understanding of the ensemble rehearsal process, as well as developing performance skills, and nurturing student creativity and musicianship. The ensembles will perform in at least two concerts in a semester, with other opportunities for performance on campus and in the community as they arise.
- Theater 8 - Students begin with an introduction to William Shakespeare and the world of Elizabethan England, and read a work of Shakespeare as a class. Their semester-long project is the conceptualization, writing, and production of their own original piece of theater – a retelling of the Shakespeare play with a new setting and context. The final project is a performance of their work. Along the way, they are given projects for deeper research, explore methods of storytelling, and develop their analytical skills for plot and character.
- Visual Art 8 - Visual Art 8 builds upon the foundations studied in Visual Arts 7, expanding into more in-depth personal artistic problem solving. Projects draw upon a range of skills, engage students in the draft process, and foster personal expression. Though working on individual projects, students are expected to engage in constructive critique and collaboration as they encounter challenges and develop creative solutions.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

Physical Education runs 4 periods per cycle in 6th grade and 2 periods per cycle in 7th and 8th grade for the whole school year. All three years of Physical Education begin the year with team-building activities and progress to a range of activities focusing on cooperation, skill development, and healthy living. Students are also exposed to a variety of team, individual, and lifelong sports in order to further their skill development. Evaluation is based on active participation, enthusiasm, and improvement. In each grade, there are different sports-based units such as volleyball, foot-volley, basketball, indoor soccer, handball, and ultimate frisbee. P.E. is given a pass/fail grade.

HEALTH AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

Health meets for 2 rotations of a cycle as a supplement to Physical Education. All three years of Health begin by creating class norms as well as learning about the benefits of mindfulness and engaging in a variety of different mindfulness exercises. Each year builds on skills and information learned the previous year with focuses on relationships, boundaries and taking care of one's body and mind.

- **Health 6** focuses on helping students adjust to the social/emotional aspects of middle school. Lessons on bullying prevention, respect for self and others, assertive communication and active listening are at the forefront of the curriculum. Students also work to understand their changing bodies, personalities and needs.
- **Health 7** focuses on supporting the social, emotional, and physical changes of the students. Students participate in discussions and lessons with the goal of developing skills to make informed and healthy choices. Topics include a review of sixth grade themes as well as a more in-depth look at issues affecting middle school students, such as stress, nutrition, sleep, decision making and peer relationships.
- **Health 8** focuses on students having a personal foundation to be able to make healthy decisions for themselves in high school and beyond. Students become aware of resources in their families, communities, and globally to be able to access valid information to help them make healthy decisions as they go through life. Topics in eighth grade include decision making, peer relationships, transitions and sex education.

SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING

In all grades in the Middle School at Worcester Academy, all students are members of an advisory which meets every morning for check in as well as four lessons a week for our Social-Emotional curriculum. This curriculum focuses on study skills, digital citizenship, cultural competency, interpersonal skills, and community building. For community building, students will engage in at least one “community day” of team building and Worcester-based activities. Additionally, every grade level attends one overnight outdoor education experience (one night in 6th grade, 2 nights in 7th grade, and 3 nights in 8th grade).

Student Portfolios

All students are given a Student Portfolio on Google Sites when they start at WA. From the beginning of the year, students select artifacts from their learning journey and write reflections that connect each artifact to a learner portrait skill. This enables students to take ownership over the learning process and celebrate their growth. At the end of the year, they present their portfolio to their parents and peers. The portfolio will continue for the entirety of their time in the middle school.

Digital citizenship

Students will gain an awareness of how and how much they use devices and media and how that use affects relationships and their health. Students also develop information and media literacy skills, learning how to evaluate websites and information and detect bias in news sources.

P.A.S.S. (Preparatory Academic Skills and Strategies)

Students will understand and develop executive functioning, study and self-management skills that promote their academic and personal growth.

C.A.F.E. (Cultural Awareness for Everyone)

Students will develop vocabulary for talking about diversity and identity, explore a variety of perspectives, and build skills for having challenging conversations about identity and difference. In grade 6 the focus is identity, in grade 7 the focus is community, and in grade 8 the focus is cultural awareness and advocacy.

Advisory

- **Advisory 6:** In 6th grade, students learn the basics of what it means to be a student at WA with significant support and scaffolding from their advisory. The students explore their own identities and those of their classmates and appreciate how these unique identities form their rich community.
- **Advisory 7:** In 7th grade advisory, with the addition of a large portion of new students to the grade, there is a significant focus on building community through advisory activities and all grade activities. While advisory continues to include significant academic support and check-ins, students are given more independence and responsibility. Students also investigate topics related to specific topics such as proper internet behavior and how to be a supportive classmate.
- **Advisory 8:** In 8th grade advisory, we focus on leadership and a move towards independent learning. We do this through reflections and The Passion Project, where students are asked to design and carry-out a long-term project that allows them to explore something about which they are passionate. Once they have completed their project, the 8th graders present their work and findings to the community. The goal of 8th grade advisory is to prepare students for success in the Upper School by having them reflect on their roles in a community and their strengths and challenges as a learner.

ELECTIVES

Electives are offered for grades 6-8 on a semester basis and meet twice weekly. Students choose their top three preferences and every effort is taken to accommodate their choices. Electives are graded classes and have an academic or disciplinary focus. They are proposed by teachers and approved by the academic leadership. Examples of electives that have been offered are: Jazz

Ensemble, Middler Minute News, Outdoor Science, Robotics, Coding, Archaeology, Math Team, and the Board of Monitors.

CLUBS

Clubs are for grades 6-8 and are student proposed and led. They are offered on a semester basis and meet once weekly. Students choose their top three preferences and every effort is taken to accommodate their choices. Clubs are not graded and focus more on student interest. Examples of clubs that have been offered are: Ultimate Frisbee, Pickleball, Fashion Exploration, Comic Book Making, and Crafting.