

INNOVATION



ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOL

MIDDLE SCHOOL
Program of Studies

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Grade 5 Coursework

Math	Full Year/5 days/50 min.
English Language Arts	Full Year/5 blocks per week/50-60 min.
Social Studies Project	Full Year/3 blocks per week/50-90 min.
Science Project	Full Year/3 blocks per week/50-90 min.
IACS 101	Full Year/4 days/50 min.
Wellness/Challenge	1 Quarter/4 days/50 min.
Wellness/Health Education	1 Quarter/4 days/50 min.
Creative Arts	1 Quarter/4 days/ 50 min.
General Music	1 Quarter/4 days/ 50 min.
Advisory/WIN	Full Year/5 days/40 min.
Enrichment	Full Year/1 days/70 min.

Grades 6-8 Coursework

Math	Full Year/5 days/50 min.
English Language Arts	Full Year/5 blocks per week/50-60 min.
Social Studies Project	Full Year/3 blocks per week/50-90 min.
Science Project	Full Year/3 blocks per week/50-90 min.
Spanish or Academic Support	Full Year/4 days/50 min.
Wellness/Challenge	1 Quarter/4 days/50 min.
Wellness/Health Education	1 Quarter/4 days/50 min.
Creative Arts	1 Quarter/4 days/ 50 min.
General Music	1 Quarter/4 days/ 50 min.
Advisory/WIN	Full Year/5 days/40 min.
Erichment	Full Year/1 days/70 min.

Our Schedule

Middle school students have a unique schedule, which supports our mission of engaging students in project-based learning. Students take project classes and skills classes. Science and Social Studies classes meet for 90 minute blocks twice per week day and for a 50 minute block once per week. English Language Arts classes meet for 60 minutes 4 days per week and once per week for 50 minutes. Math classes meet 5 days per week for 50 minutes.

Over a two year period, students have an opportunity to build a strong relationship with their teachers while the teachers have the opportunity to get to know each individual student and their family.

Students also take Challenge (physical education), Health, Music, and Art classes at all grade levels. Students alternate quarterly between these classes and meet 4 days per week for each special. In sixth grade, students start taking Spanish, which meets roughly four time per week for 50 minutes for the full school year.

Finally, students have Enrichment once per week for 70 minutes.

Advisory

At Innovation Academy, each student is a member of a small advisory group in which they can develop and enhance their social and emotional skills, develop positive organization and work habits, and practice citizenship through community service. The advisory program exists to develop trusting and supportive relationships between adults and students to improve on the overall experience of students while at IACS. Students generally loop with their advisor from fifth to sixth grade and then again from seventh to eighth grade. Advisory meets at least 3 days a week with their staff advisor.

Through advisory, students practice and build proficiency in the four IACS outcomes:

- Self-Direction
- Problem Solving
- Community Membership
- Effective Communication

Advisories engage in both academic and non-academic activities throughout the school year. Some activities and challenges build group spirit and cohesiveness, and encourage students to develop critical thinking, problem solving and communication skills. Students also learn strategies to manage the academic demands of middle school. The staff advisor helps develop and monitor Individual Learning Plans (ILPs) and monitor student progress toward maintaining a portfolio of a student's best work and supporting students through the Quality Night and Jury preparation process. The advisor acts as a liaison with families, partnering to ensure students are making strong academic, social, and emotional growth.

English Language Arts

English Language Arts (ELA) classes build upon students' current skills in reading and writing and push them to develop more sophisticated reading strategies and writing abilities. Students also explore current events and other non-fiction texts, as well as engage in grammar instruction and practice.

All ELA curriculum values our four school outcomes: students learn and practice oral presentation and discussion skills, listening skills, and making effective decisions during the writing process to create a strong final product (Effective Communication); peer conferencing and collaboration (Community Membership); careful interpretation of rubric expectations, revision, study skills, and meeting due dates (Self-Direction); and active reading strategies to inform reading comprehension, inference, and context clues, as well as making connections and applying concepts to the world outside of literature (Problem Solving).

IACS 101

All fifth graders take the IACS 101 course. IACS 101 is a course designed to support students in their transition into middle school. It focuses on the expectations and policies at IACS as well as social-emotional and executive functioning skills that help students be successful in middle school. Students learn strategies and tools that will help them with their growth and engagement in all classes. Students also work on building their knowledge and skills in the four IACS outcomes- Self Direction, Problem Solving, Community Membership, and Effective communication by completing projects focused on each outcome. Students in IACS 101 will also learn basic technology skills as part of the course to help build their digital literacy as they enter middle school.

Mathematics

The math curriculum combines standards-based instruction in skills and concepts with project-based exploration. Our approach seeks to foster students' mathematical independence and their abilities to explore real-world problems and challenges. At the start of fifth grade, diagnostic assessments provide information for teachers to target learning for individual students. In sixth, seventh, and eighth grade, there are two levels of math class to provide students with the right level of challenge for their personal growth and future success.

The goal is to challenge all students to apply their mathematics knowledge in their lives by asking thoughtful questions, responding to others' inquiries, and critically assessing and effectively presenting their own work. We focus on collaborative learning, technology integration, effective communication, critical thinking and problem solving skills.

Science

Science students engage with a robust phenomenon-based, hands-on curriculum that is designed to give students engaging, realistic experiences that mirror how scientists and engineers actually work. Students take on the role of scientists throughout each unit to address real-world problems, develop and strengthen claims by collecting evidence and testing assumptions, and apply their learning in new contexts. Students participate in an Engineering Internship, which is designed to provide students with an opportunity to apply a concept they've learned to solve a problem. Application situations like these enable students to think critically, see how the information they've learned is useful, while also offering the chance to deepen their understanding of that information.

Social Studies

Social Studies follows a project-based learning approach. All units in social studies engage students in a variety of activities, such as debate, model creation, role play, simulations, and writing in various genres.

Each semester, students create several polished products in addition to class activities. These pieces, graded with rubrics, are the primary form of assessment in Social Studies. Projects invite students to use creativity to demonstrate their knowledge in a variety of ways.

Spanish

The Spanish program is a proficiency-based program that immerses the students in the language from the first day. Students are expected to participate and stay in the target language 100% of the time while in class. By immersing themselves in Spanish, students begin to learn the natural way and are encouraged to speak as often as possible, embracing errors as a natural part of learning a language. Teachers provide comprehensible input, guided activities, games, music, physical activity, guided readings and group-building methods to create an error-tolerant, risk-free environment for students to learn in. Students track their Spanish growth in a digital portfolio that includes all of their middle school video prompts, writing prompts and one-on-one interviews.

Art

In art, students explore a wide variety of materials and techniques, learn about art elements, and principles, and are exposed to diverse art movements and artists. Students engage in a variety of projects that provide opportunities for both skill development and creative expression. In fifth grade, content covers fundamental art elements and principles and the development of skills using a variety of techniques, such as drawing, painting, printmaking and collage. In sixth grade, units include Landscape Drawing, Land Art and Architecture. In seventh grade, students work towards the creation of a narrative piece – either an illustrated book or comic or a stop motion animation. In eighth grade, students focus on design during three units: Furniture Design, Graphic Design & Fashion Design.

General Music

Students take general music each day for half of a semester. At the fifth and sixth grade level, the goal of the course is to enhance musical literacy and playing skills. The topics covered include the elements of music reading, music technology, and music terminology. Students will be performing on classroom instruments as well as singing. Students focus on the element of rhythm in 5th grade and then melody and harmony in 6th grade. Classes will be exposed to a wide variety of

music from differing cultures. At the seventh and eighth grade level, students hone their performance skills. Seventh grade students will learn how to play the ukulele, and in doing so become familiar with reading music, musical terminology, music performance, and teaching others about music that interests them. Eighth grade students will use the knowledge they've gained throughout their middle school years to write their own music. The class will analyze music familiar to them and use the information learned to write original compositions.

Wellness

Our Wellness Program combines skills-based health classes and physical education classes, referred to as Challenge classes, for all students in grades 5-12. The goals of the Wellness program are to: promote personal fitness while developing lifelong fitness skills; foster and promote healthy decision-making and advocacy; and to enhance the school's outcomes of community membership, effective communication, problem solving and self direction.

Health Education

The health education curriculum addresses the multiple strands of one's health, including but not limited to issues of physical, emotional, social and mental health. It is designed to support and encourage students in taking personal responsibility for achieving and maintaining optimal well-being, and reducing health-related risk behaviors by encouraging healthy decision making. Emphasis is placed on making real-world connections between class content and the lives our students lead.

Challenge

Challenge classes emphasize the school outcomes of effective communication, community membership, self direction, and problem solving. While competition is undeniably a key component of sport, Challenge classes emphasize inclusive teamwork and reflection during all activities. Students are exposed to a wide variety of modified sports and team building activities requiring them to think outside of the box, and to become effective problem solvers and communicators. Students will spend significant time working in cooperative groups; they will be asked to think critically about what it means to be part of a team and then to develop various productive solutions to different challenges that come with teamwork. Through daily activities, students will also begin to acquire and refine a variety of manipulative locomotor and non-locomotor movement skills, and will develop an understanding of the different purposes of sport in society. Students will additionally learn basic biomechanics and exercise physiology and will apply the concept of wellness to their lives.

Enrichment

The Enrichment program allows students to choose an activity to participate in weekly for 70 minutes. Some Enrichment courses will be a commitment for the entire year, while others will be seasonal: Fall Enrichment, Winter Enrichment, and Spring Enrichment. Students will be able to elect their top choices at the start of the school year, and be placed accordingly. Some examples of Enrichment courses may include: Band, Chorus, Library, Yoga and Mindfulness, Open Art Studio, Team sports, Lifetime Fitness, and Yearbook Club.