


# Middle School Planning Guide 2024-2025



(Revised 07.25.2024)

The Middle School Planning Guide is crafted to aid students and families in comprehending the programs and courses available at the Middle School. At Pine Lake, students will engage in a mandatory core academic curriculum comprising English/Language Arts, Mathematics, Social Studies, Science, Spanish, and Healthful Living. Additionally, students will partake in an elective program, affording them the opportunity to select courses from a diverse range of offerings.

Families are urged to carefully review the course offerings to grasp both the required courses and the elective options available, enabling them to effectively fulfill their middle school requirements.

## The Middle School Day

Students attend seven classes daily from 8:15 am – 3:15 pm. Each class period is 45 minutes long with the exception of English/Language Arts, which is a double block class. As a double block class, each student will have this course for 90 minutes a day for the entirety of the school year. All students at the Middle School will follow a second-block schedule as highlighted:

| Daily Bell Schedule | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Period** | **Time** | **Period** |
| | | |
| 2 | 8:15 am – 9:00 am | 2nd Block |
| 3 | 9:05 am – 9:50 am | 3rd Block |
| 4 | 9:55 am – 10:40 am | 4th Block |
| 5 | 10:45 am – 11:30 am | 5th Block |
| 6 | 11:35 am – 12:45 pm | 6th Block and lunch |
| | 11:35 pm – 11:55 pm | Lunch A |
| | 12:25 pm - 12:45 pm | Lunch B |
| 7 | 12:50 pm – 1:35 pm | 7th Block |
| 8 | 1:40 pm – 2:25 pm | 8th Block |
| 9 | 2:30 pm – 3:15 pm | 9th Block |

## Exceptional Children Programs and Services

Pine Lake Preparatory's program for Exceptional Children is dedicated to ensuring that all students with disabilities will have access to a full continuum of educational opportunities and services based on individual needs. Pine Lake Preparatory provides special education services and related services according to the federal mandates of the Individual with Disabilities Education Act. Pine Lake Preparatory also provides support and training to the regular education teachers as needed to implement interventions, accommodations and modifications in the regular education classroom setting.

For additional information related to Exceptional Children's services please contact the Director of Exceptional Children – Mr. Luke Ruggieri at *Luke.Ruggieri@pinelakeprep.org*.

## School Counseling Services

Pine Lake Preparatory offers guidance services to our students and families through our Student Support Services department. Our Student Service Coordinators provide

support across multiple domains, including academic achievement, personal/social development, and career development. Our goal is to nurture the development of well-adjusted young adults.

We are committed to addressing the holistic needs of our students and providing them with the necessary resources and support to navigate through challenges effectively. Pine Lake Preparatory has partnered with local mental health agencies to offer School Based Therapy (SBT) through licensed clinicians who are trained to diagnose and treat mental health disorders using therapeutic techniques through counseling and psychotherapy. SBT refers to the provision of counseling services to students during the school day, at the school. This is a more intensive support and long term approach to supporting students' mental health needs in comparison to the brief, short-term check-ins offered by Pine Lake's school counselors or student service coordinators.

Student Support Services is responsible for all 504 plans ensuring compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities (ADA) Act.

For additional information related to Middle School counseling services please contact Ms. Heather Craddock at *heather.craddock@pinelakeprep.org* *or* Ms. Erin Buda at *erin.buda@pinelakeprep.org*.

## Athletics

As a member of the Piedmont Charter Athletic Conference, Middle School athletics are open to 7th and 8th grade students currently enrolled at Pine Lake Preparatory.

Pine Lake is dedicated to the academic success of our student athletes. The following guidelines will be followed for students to be eligible for extracurricular athletic activities:

- A student must have passed a minimum number of core classes in the previous semester. Semester 1 will include August – December (Term 1-2) and semester 2 will include January – June (Term 3-4).
- Eligibility of students in programs for exceptional children will be in accordance with local, state, and federal guidelines.
- A minimum load is defined as six courses.
- A student, upon first entering grade seven, is academically eligible for competition on middle school teams.

Eligibility is determined from the prior semester and holds for the entire sports season.

Middle School sports offerings include (subject to change):

| **Fall Sports** | **Winter Sports** | **Spring Sports** |
|---|---|---|
| Cheerleading<br>Football<br>Volleyball (girls)<br>Soccer (boys)<br>Cross Country (girls and boys)* | Cheerleading<br>Basketball (girls and boys)<br>Swimming and Diving * | Soccer (girls)<br>Baseball<br>Softball<br>Lacrosse (boys)<br>Co-ed Golf<br>Co-ed Tennis |

* ***Swimming/diving and cross country is open to sixth grade students***

It is important to recognize the time commitment associated with each team varies. For information specific to commitment, potential practice schedules, and games schedules please contact Mr. Brett Hayford at ad@pinelakeprep.org (US Athletic Director) or Ms. Erica Singleton at erica.singleston@pinelakeprep.org (MS Athletic Director).

## National Junior Honor Society

The National Junior Honor Society (NJHS) is an organization that promotes recognition for middle school students who reflect outstanding accomplishments in the areas of scholarship, leadership, service, citizenship and character. Membership in NJHS is one of the highest honors that can be awarded to a student at Pine Lake Preparatory. Eligibility for National Junior Honor Society is limited to 8th grade students who have maintained all A's for seventh and eighth grade and excel in the five NJHS pillars/ideals – scholarship, leadership, service, citizenship and character. Students are accepted and inducted in a formal ceremony that takes place in the fall.

## Middle School Excursions (subject to change)

Pine Lake is excited to offer grade level field trips and excursions to supplement and enrich the classroom learning and foster collaboration, relationships and team building.

**6th Grade –** YMCA Blue Ridge Assembly

Situated in the Blue Ridge Mountains near Asheville, North Carolina, the YMCA Blue Ridge Assembly offers an environmental education program that supplements PLP's science curriculum. Surrounded by mountains, streams, wildflowers, valleys and spectacular views, students will have an opportunity to learn in an active and hands-on environment.

**7th Grade –** The 7th grade will take various field trips; Whitewater Center, Roller Skating, Bowling, to name a few.

**8Th Grade –**Washington D.C.

Washington D.C. provides a backdrop for the Social Studies curriculum and offers students the opportunity to explore historic landmarks. The U.S. Capitol, the National Mall, US Holocaust Museum, National Archives, Arlington National Cemetery, Air and Space Museum, Natural History Museum, White House and American History Museum are just a few of our many stops.

## Grading Scale

Preparatory operates on a ten point grading scale. Student letter grades will be identified as follows:

Pine Lake Preparatory will publish a semester based Honor Roll for students who have earned all A's or students who have earned all A's and B's.

| Percentage | Letter |
|---|---|
| 90% - 100% | A |
| 89% - 80% | B |
| 79% - 70% | C |
| 69% - 60% | D |
| ≤ 59% | F |

## Honor Code

Membership in a community carries responsibilities and rights and the Honor Code at Pine Lake Preparatory serves to protect the rights of all by requiring standards of academic integrity. As a citizen of the Pine Lake Preparatory community, its members understand that engaging in academic dishonesty, no matter the degree or form, undermines the character of the school at large. Together the students and staff of the Middle School will uphold the standards of academic integrity through our collective attitudes and actions.

Together we pledge (Honor Pledge):

*I pledge to support the Honor Code of Pine Lake Preparatory. I will refrain from any and all forms of academic dishonesty or deception, such as cheating or plagiarism. I will neither give nor receive unauthorized assistance on any academic exercise. I am aware that as a member of the Pine Lake academic community, it is my responsibility to report all suspected violations of the Honor Code*.

Violations and consequences specific to the Honor Code (cheating, plagiarism and falsification) can be found in the Family Guidebook.

## Student Placement

Student placement into classes is decided upon by the Principal per North Carolina law. The administration will take into account term assessment averages, EOG, i-Ready score(s), and attendance when making decisions regarding student placement into all classes.

## Co Curricular Opportunities

Understanding that the Middle School experience goes beyond the core academic program, Pine Lake offers a variety of co-curricular programs to promote student growth. Co-curricular opportunities are open to students in grades 6th – 8th and are subject to change yearly. Following are some examples:

Yearbook
Science Olympiad
Aquaponics
Jr. Excel Club
Sporklings
MS Musical
Math Counts
Student Council
Chess Club
Quiz Bowl
Battle of the Books

## Science Technology Engineering and Math

Middle School STEM courses at Pine Lake Preparatory utilize the Project Lead The Way (PLTW) curriculum: the nation's leading provider of STEM programs. This world-class curriculum and high-quality teacher professional development model, combined with an engaged network of educators and corporate and community partners, help students develop the skills necessary to succeed in our global economy.

There are PLTW programs in more than 5,000 elementary, middle, and high schools in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. PLTW schools can be found in rural, urban, and suburban districts; across all income levels; as well as in public, private, and charter schools. PLTW's success in preparing students with the knowledge and skills they need to succeed has been recognized by colleges and universities, Fortune 500 businesses, and numerous national organizations including Change the Equation, the Social Impact Exchange, and more. (https://www.pltw.org/about-us)

Enrollment in the STEM program is open to students in grades 7 and 8 each year. Each course is one semester long and will alternate with a PE class.

**Automation and Robotics**
In 7th Grade STEM students learn how mechanical systems work. They then use that knowledge with the VEX Robotics® platform to design, build, and program robots to solve real-world problems.

**Flight and Space**
The exciting world of aerospace comes alive through Flight and Space. Students explore the science behind aeronautics and use their knowledge to design, build, and test an airfoil. Custom-built simulation software allows students to experience space travel.

**Medical Detectives**
Students play the role of real-life medical detectives as they collect and analyze medical data to diagnose disease. They solve medical mysteries through hands-on projects and labs, measure and interpret vital signs, dissect a sheep brain, investigate disease outbreaks, and explore how a breakdown within the human body can lead to dysfunction.

## Computer Science

The goal of these courses is to develop foundational critical thinking and programming skills to help prepare students for the rapidly growing number of jobs that demand them. It is estimated that 700,000 new jobs in Computer Science will be available to students by the year 2030. PLP is a pioneer in that we are one of the few schools that offer Introduction to Computer Science courses to students in middle school. Given the demand for CS skills in the future, the state of NC recently included Computer Science in the graduation requirements for students entering high school in the 2024-2025 school year. Starting CS in middle school is a great way to get ahead and also gives students options in high school as they will have foundational skills that can apply to multiple CS, Animation and Engineering courses.

**There are two courses that are open to students in grades 7-8 based on their experience and knowledge set:**

**Intro to Computer Science Part A:** New to Computer Science students are encouraged to take this course. In this course, they will have the opportunity to learn the basics of programming through vocabulary, hands-on activities, and use of block or text based coding. This course is designed to be introductory and fun! The goal is for students to get exposure to the discipline, and no experience is needed to get started!

**Intro to Computer Science Part B**: Those who have taken Intro to Computer Science Part A, are encouraged to take Intro to Computer Science Part B. This course will introduce more advanced concepts/skills, text based coding, and utilize a variety of languages (such as JavaScript, HTML, CSS, Python, etc.) to accomplish tasks. The course will prepare students and provide the prerequisites for the upper school computer science program. At the end of this course, students will earn a high school credit for Computer Science and will fulfill the mandated North Carolina state graduation requirement.

Students in both classes will enjoy making a variety of projects including games, apps, websites and more. They will also gain exposure to different aspects of computer science such as AI, web development, data, physical computing, game development, graphics/animation, digital literacy, and more! Courses are CSTA standards aligned and prepare students for high school courses such as AP CS Principles.

## PowerSchool and Canvas

In 2013, North Carolina began updating its web-based student information system, which affects all public schools including Pine Lake Preparatory. The system, called PowerSchool, provides numerous functions and applications for students, teachers, and parents - including attendance management, administrator dashboards, faculty management, discipline management and reporting, centralized enrollment, student scheduling, family information databases, and grade books.

For convenient access to the PowerSchool login site, we have created a link in the “Parents” tab of PineLakePrep.org. As a parent or a student, you have 24-hour access to attendance records and grades through this portal.

In conjunction with PowerSchool, PLP will be using Canvas, a secure online learning platform where teachers and students can collaborate, share content, and use educational apps to augment in-classroom learning. Within this private learning environment, managed by classroom teachers only, students can only interact with others in the class. Canvas provides a safe and easy way to connect and support learning beyond the classroom.

The goal of Canvas at the Middle School is to enhance our use of technology in the classroom while facilitating college and career readiness for our students. Canvas provides teachers with the ability to gather feedback, opinions and responses through polls, use notes to encourage student dialogue, use quizzes for formative and summative assessments and organize student assignments within an interactive classroom community. Although the target audience for Canvas is the students, parents will have access to monitor the group through a parent code. Parent codes must be requested by the student and cannot be accessed by school personnel.

## Attendance

Attendance in class is critical for academic success at Pine Lake Preparatory. Students who are ill should remain at home to recover; however, parents and students should be aware that frequent absences often result in academic difficulties. We encourage scheduling of appointments and travel during non-school hours and scheduled breaks. Please remember to send a note or documentation explaining your child's absence each day they are required to be out of school. You must submit an excuse or provide a written explanation of the absence within two days of your child's return to school or the absence will be unexcused. In line with the North Carolina School Compulsory Attendance Law students are afforded 10 unexcused absences for the year.

## 6th Grade Required Courses

### English Language Arts 6

Language Arts 6 is based on the Common Core State Standards for English/Language Arts. Students will read a range of challenging novels, articles, and poems, and will be expected to demonstrate their understanding of the material by answering critical thinking questions and contributing to class discussions. In sixth grade, students will be expected to integrate information and compare and contrast different sources and texts. Students will write a variety of texts including short stories, research essays, and persuasive papers. Students will continue to work on their use of language, sentence structure, and organization of ideas.

### Spanish Language Arts 6 (immersion only)

The Spanish Language Arts Immersion Program for middle school! In this exciting program, students will have the opportunity to immerse themselves in the wonderful world of the Spanish language while exploring language arts in an interactive and engaging way.

Our program is designed to provide students with a comprehensive experience that merges the teaching of the Spanish language with the appreciation of literary arts, creative writing, theater, poetry, and much more. Through a variety of dynamic activities and inspiring projects, students will develop their language skills, creativity, and appreciation for the cultural richness of the Spanish language.

### Social Studies 6

Beginning of Human Society to the Emergence of the First Global Age (1450)
Students in sixth grade will continue to expand the knowledge, skills and understandings acquired in the fourth and fifth grade studies of North Carolina and the United States by connecting those studies to their first formal look at a study of the world. Sixth graders will focus heavily on the discipline of geography by using the themes of location, place, movement, human-environment interaction and region to understand the mergence, expansion and decline of civilization and societies from the beginning of human existence to the Age of Exploration. Students will take a systematic look at the history of culture of various world regions including the development of economic, political and social systems through the lens of change and continuity. As students examine the various factors that shaped the development of civilization, societies and regions in the ancient world, they will examine both similarities and differences among these areas. In addition to content acquisition, students will master skills related to examining, interpreting and understanding information.

### Science 6

Science in sixth grade is a combination of life science, physical science and earth science. The integration of science content, inquiry, experimentation, and technological

design are merged with each of the following topics: Astronomy, Earth Science, Plants, Ecosystems, Forces and Motion, Matter and Oceanography.

### Math 6/Math 6 Advanced

Mathematics 6 is based on the North Carolina Standard Course of Study (NCSCOS) for sixth grade mathematics. Math 6 Advanced is a fast paced course covering grade 6 and half of the grade 7 standards in a single year.

### Spanish 1A

This course builds on the lower school Spanish curriculum while providing a solid foundation for Spanish 1 at the Middle School level. While actively participating in the four areas of language learning: listening, speaking, reading, and writing, the course will have an added emphasis on oral/aural communication. Students in Middle School Spanish will participate in a wide range of activities inclusive of a variety of learning styles to encourage a comfort level in using the Spanish language.

### Spanish Immersion Conexiones 6 (immersion only)

Conexiones is a program that ensures continued growth in Spanish language proficiency while cultivating global competencies in students. It consists of a comprehensive, interdisciplinary middle school curriculum. It is designed to support post-immersion and heritage language learners as they transition out of elementary school and prepare for the rigors of middle school and on to high school. The curriculum is project-based and empowers students to use their language skills to complete projects grounded in the Sustainable Development Goals. By working with their local communities and connecting with classrooms abroad, students are cultivating global competencies, learning about different cultures, and gaining the necessary skills to become bilingual global leaders. The Conexiones themes include: Global Society and Culture, Environment and Geography, Access and Equity, and Economic Sustainability.

### 6th Grade Physical Education (Semester Class)

Physical education is required for all sixth grade students and is based on the North Carolina Essential Standards for Healthful Living. Broken into health education and physical education, middle school students will develop the skills necessary to maintain a healthy and physically active lifelong lifestyle. Health Education standards are broken into five strands, Mental/Emotional Health, Alcohol/Tobacco/Other Drugs, Nutrition/Physical Activity, Interpersonal Relationships/Communication, and Personal/Consumer Health. Physical education standards are broken into four strands, Motor Skills, Movement Concepts, Health Related Fitness, and Personal/Social Responsibility.

### Success (Semester Class)

Success prepares students for school and life beyond the middle school years. Students will strengthen necessary academic skills which include, but are not limited to, keyboarding, computer applications, public speaking, time management, financial literacy and digital wellness. Students will collaborate and take initiative to research,

develop and implement a community service project to better the community in which they live. The goal of the course will be to grow our academic capacity through the successful implementation of a beneficial societal change in the school or community.

## 6th Grade Elective Courses

### Visual Arts

Visual Arts class is designated for students to share their visual art talent through many mediums, not including arts and crafts. Drawing, painting, computer art, and 3D modeling will all be a part of this class. A level of technical skills is expected and out of the box thinking is a must. Students' creative ways through all visual art mediums. Skills to consider for this class are patience, attention to detail, problem solving, confidence to express yourself, and ability to take risks. Over the course of the semester, each student should challenge himself or herself to become stronger in every possible way as a visual artist. Prospective students do not have to be gifted in the area of the art but rather display exemplary efforts.

### Orchestra

Orchestra is a class designated to the study of orchestral string instruments. Instrumental choices include the violin, viola, cello, and bass. In this class students will learn how to read music and play their instrument while fostering a love for music literature, theory, and history. Students with a high interest in instrumental music will enjoy this class. No previous musical experience is necessary however, it is important to understand students will be placed in an ability-leveled class.

### Band

Band is a class designated to the study of select woodwind, brass, and percussion instruments. Instrumental choices include: flute, clarinet, alto saxophone, trumpet, and trombone. After a year of band study, a wind player may audition for placement in percussion, at the recommendation of their director. Students in each level of Instrumental Band will learn to play in a concert band atmosphere. No previous musical experience is necessary however, it is important to understand students will be placed in an ability-leveled class.

### Chorus

Chorus is a semester-long performance class that teaches the basics of good choral singing and basic musicianship. Students learn and perform a varied repertoire throughout the year that includes songs in different styles and languages, representing different historical periods. In addition to the enjoyment of making music together, they learn how to sing with proper vocal technique and how to read music.

Chorus teaches students the importance and necessity of unity and teamwork. Together they experience the satisfaction of achieving improvement/excellence over time through

hard work and discipline. Choir students become sharper listeners, better audience members, and develop an increased appreciation for music.

### Theatre Arts

Theatre Arts class is designated for students to share their theatrical talents in both written and verbal venues. The theatre arts program in 6th grade will provide an opportunity for students to explore and master skills in creative dramatics. Classroom activities include pantomime, improvisation, characterization, role-playing, original dialogue, puppetry, reader's theatre, costume and set design, and play production. Emphasis will be placed on a variety of in-class performances and presentations. The class includes original written work in play writing. Students will perform monologues and plays in front of their classmates as well as the Pine Lake community. The students will have opportunities to relate theatre to history, society, and culture. Skills to consider for this class are imagination, creativity, cooperation, collaboration, creative writing and performing.

## 7th Grade Required Courses

### English Language Arts 7

Language Arts 7 is based on the Common Core State Standards for English/Language Arts. Students will read complex texts (fictional and nonfictional) including short stories, novels, plays, and poems. Students will develop skills related to citing evidence when analyzing a text or supporting their own arguments. During various writing tasks, students will focus on introducing topics clearly, providing concluding statements, organizing their ideas clearly, using appropriate grammar, providing smooth transitions, and using precise language to explain a topic.

### Spanish Language Arts 7 (immersion only)

The Spanish Language Arts Immersion Program for middle school! In this exciting program, students will have the opportunity to immerse themselves in the wonderful world of the Spanish language while exploring language arts in an interactive and engaging way.

Our program is designed to provide students with a comprehensive experience that merges the teaching of the Spanish language with the appreciation of literary arts, creative writing, theater, poetry, and much more. Through a variety of dynamic activities and inspiring projects, students will develop their language skills, creativity, and appreciation for the cultural richness of the Spanish language.

### Social Studies 7

The Great Global Convergence (1400-1800) to the Present
Students in seventh grade will continue to expand upon the knowledge, skills and understanding acquired in the sixth grade examination of early civilizations. Seventh

graders study the world from the Age of Exploration to contemporary times in order to understand the implications of increased global interactions. The focus will remain on the discipline of geography by using the themes of location, place, movement, human-environment interaction and region to understand modern societies and regions. This course will guide students through patterns of change and continuity with a focus on conflict and cooperation, economic development, population shifts, political through and organization, cultural values and beliefs and the impact of the environment over time. Through an investigation of various factors that shaped the development of societies and regions in the modern world and global interactions, students will examine both similarities and differences. In addition to content acquisition, students will master skills related to examining, interpreting and understanding information.

### Science 7

Science in seventh grade is a combination of life science, physical science and earth science. The integration of science content, inquiry, experimentation, and technological design are merged with each of the following topics: Atmosphere and Weather, Human Body Systems, Heredity and Genetics, and Motion and Forces.

### Math 7/Math 7 Advanced

Mathematics 7 is based on North Carolina Standard Course of Study (NCSCOS) for seventh grade mathematics. Instructional time focuses on four critical areas: (1) developing understanding of and applying proportional relationships; (2) developing understanding of operation with rational numbers and working with expressions and linear equations; (3) solving problems involving scale drawings and informal geometric constructions, and working with two- and three- dimensional shapes to solve problems involving area, surface area, and volume; and (4) drawing inferences about populations based on samples. Math 7 Advanced is a fast paced course that will complete the other half of 7th grade standards that began in Advanced Math 6 and all of the 8th grade standards.

### Spanish 1B

In the first half of the two year middle school Spanish 1 sequence, students will actively participate in the four areas of language learning: listening, speaking, reading, and writing, with an emphasis on oral/aural communication. The basic functions covered will be formulating questions and both positive and negative responses, giving and receiving directions, communicating in the simple present and future, and indicating needs and desires. Through individual and cooperative learning activities students will practice such specific topics as talking about people, describing everyday items, ordering meals in restaurants, shopping for food, and other common daily activities. Students will also learn about the Hispanic world and its varied cultures, particularly as underscored by the language via formal and informal address, concepts of family and nationality, and gesture, among others.

*A passing grade earned in both Spanish 1A and 1B will appear on the high school transcript as Spanish I credit however; it will not be factored into the high school G.P.A.*

### Spanish Immersion Conexiones 7 (immersion only)

Conexiones is a program that ensures continued growth in Spanish language proficiency while cultivating global competencies in students. It consists of a comprehensive, interdisciplinary middle school curriculum. It is designed to support post-immersion and heritage language learners as they transition out of elementary school and prepare for the rigors of middle school and on to high school. The curriculum is project-based and empowers students to use their language skills to complete projects grounded in the Sustainable Development Goals. By working with their local communities and connecting with classrooms abroad, students are cultivating global competencies, learning about different cultures, and gaining the necessary skills to become bilingual global leaders. The Conexiones themes include: Global Society and Culture, Environment and Geography, Access and Equity, and Economic Sustainability.

### 7th Grade Physical Education (Semester Class)

Physical education is required for all seventh grade students and is based on the North Carolina Essential Standards for Healthful Living. Broken into health education and physical education, middle school students will develop the skills necessary to maintain a healthy and physically active lifelong lifestyle. Health Education standards are broken into five strands, Mental/Emotional Health, Alcohol/Tobacco/Other Drugs, Nutrition/Physical Activity, Interpersonal Relationships/Communication, and Personal/Consumer Health. Physical education standards are broken into four strands, Motor Skills, Movement Concepts, Health Related Fitness, and Personal/Social Responsibility.

## 7th Grade Elective Courses

### Visual Arts

Visual Arts class is designated for students to share their visual art talent through many mediums, not including arts and crafts. Drawing, painting, computer art, and 3D modeling will all be a part of this class. A level of technical skills is expected and out of the box thinking is a must. Students' creative ways through all visual art mediums. Skills to consider for this class are patience, attention to detail, problem solving, confidence to express yourself, and ability to take risks. Over the course of the year, each student should challenge himself or herself to become stronger in every possible way as a visual artist. Prospective students do not have to be gifted in the area of the art but rather display exemplary efforts.

### Orchestra

Orchestra is a class designated to the study of orchestral string instruments. Instrumental choices include the violin, viola, cello, and bass. In this class students will learn how to read music and play their instrument while fostering a love for music

literature, theory, and history. Students with a high interest in instrumental music will enjoy this class. No previous musical experience is necessary however, it is important to understand students will be placed in an ability-leveled class.

### Band

Band is a class designated to the study of select woodwind, brass, and percussion instruments. Instrumental choices include: flute, clarinet, alto saxophone, trumpet, and trombone. After a year of band study, a wind player may audition for placement in percussion, at the recommendation of their director. Students in each level of Instrumental Band will learn to play in a concert band atmosphere. No previous musical experience is necessary however, it is important to understand students will be placed in an ability-leveled class.

### Chorus

Chorus is a year-long performance class that teaches the basics of good choral singing and basic musicianship. Students learn and perform a varied repertoire throughout the year that includes songs in different styles and languages, representing different historical periods. In addition to the enjoyment of making music together, they learn how to sing with proper vocal technique and how to read music.

Chorus teaches students the importance and necessity of unity and teamwork. Together they experience the satisfaction of achieving improvement/excellence over time through hard work and discipline. Choir students become sharper listeners, better audience members, and develop an increased appreciation for music. This is a performance-based class, so there will be two required performances throughout the school year. There will also be non-required performance opportunities for students who would like more experience.

### Theatre Arts

Theatre Arts class is designated for students to share their theatrical talents in both written and verbal venues. The theatre arts program in 7th grade will provide an opportunity for students to explore and master skills in creative dramatics. Classroom activities include pantomime, improvisation, characterization, role-playing, original dialogue, puppetry, reader's theatre, costume and set design, and play production. Emphasis will be placed on a variety of in-class performances and presentations. The class includes original written work in play writing. Students will perform monologues and plays in front of their classmates as well as the Pine Lake community. The students will have opportunities to relate theatre to history, society, and culture. Skills to consider for this class are imagination, creativity, cooperation, collaboration, creative writing and performing.

## 7th Grade Semester Elective Courses

### STEM - Automation and Robotics

In 7th Grade STEM students learn how mechanical systems work. They then use that knowledge with the VEX Robotics® platform to design, build, and program robots to solve real-world problems.

### Intro to Computer Science Part A or Intro to Computer Science Part B

Students without previous Computer Science experience can sign up for Intro to Computer Science Part A. Students who have previously completed a Computer Science course at PLP (or similar course at another school) are eligible to take Intro to Computer Science Part B. Please see page 9 for a full description of both courses.

## 8th Grade Required Courses

### English Language Arts 8

Language Arts 8 is based on the Common Core State Standards for English/Language Arts. Students will read fiction and nonfiction texts while learning to evaluate an author's assumptions and claims. Students will conduct research that will require the analysis of resources and accurate interpretation of literacy and informational text. Writing tasks in grade eight will include stories, essays, reports, and persuasive essays. A writing focus on the concepts, supporting details, organization, transitions, precise language and grammar will be included in Language Arts 8.

### Spanish Language Arts 8 (immersion only)

The Spanish Language Arts Immersion Program for middle school! In this exciting program, students will have the opportunity to immerse themselves in the wonderful world of the Spanish language while exploring language arts in an interactive and engaging way.

Our program is designed to provide students with a comprehensive experience that merges the teaching of the Spanish language with the appreciation of literary arts, creative writing, theater, poetry, and much more. Through a variety of dynamic activities and inspiring projects, students will develop their language skills, creativity, and appreciation for the cultural richness of the Spanish language.

### Social Studies 8

*North Carolina and the United States: Creation and Development of the State and Nation*

Students in eighth grade will continue to build on the fourth and fifth grade introduction to North Carolina and the United States by embarking on a more rigorous study of the historical foundations and democratic principles that continue to shape our state and

nation. Students will begin with a review of the major ideas and events preceding the foundation of North Carolina and the United States. The main focus of the course will be the critical events, personalities, issues, and developments in the state and nation from the Revolutionary Era to contemporary times. Inherent in this study is an analysis of the relationships of geography, events and people to the political, economic, technological, and cultural developments that shaped our existence in North Carolina and the United States over time. In addition to content acquisition, students will master skills related to examining, interpreting and understanding information.

### Science 8

Science in eighth grade is a combination of life science and earth science. The integration of science content, inquiry, experimentation, and technological design are merged with each of the following topics: Ecosystems, Earth Systems, Earth History, Chemistry, Evolution and Genetics, Energy: Conservation & Transfer and Microbiology.

### Math 8 or Math 1

8th Grade Math: In Grade 8, instructional time focuses on three critical areas: (1) formulating and reasoning about expressions and equations, including modeling an association in bivariate data with a linear equation, and solving linear equations and systems of linear equations; (2) grasping the concept of a function and using functions to describe quantitative relationships; (3) analyzing two- and three-dimensional space and figures using distance, angle, similarity, and congruence, and understanding and applying the Pythagorean Theorem.

Math 1: The fundamental purpose of Mathematics I is to formalize and extend the mathematics that students learned in the middle grades. The critical areas, organized into units, deepen and extend understanding of linear relationships, in part by contrasting them with exponential phenomena, and in part by applying linear models to data that exhibit a linear trend. Mathematics 1 uses properties and theorems involving congruent figures to deepen and extend understanding of geometric knowledge from prior grades. The final unit in the course ties together the algebraic and geometric ideas studied. The Mathematical Practice Standards apply throughout each course and together with the content standards, prescribe that students experience mathematics as a coherent, useful, and logical subject that makes use of their ability to make sense of problem situations.

*Students enrolled in Math 1 will take the End of Course (EOC) exam in May and a passing score will provide high school credit for Math 1. A grade earned in Math 1 will appear on the high school transcript however, it will not be factored into the high school G.P.A.*

### Spanish 2

In this course students will build on their knowledge gained in Spanish I, while actively participating in the four areas of language learning: listening, speaking, reading, and writing, with an emphasis on oral/aural communication. Functions will expand to include

the progressive tenses, telling time, giving orders, discussing feelings, making comparisons and referring to habitual actions in the past. Specific topics that the student will master in class through a greater emphasis on cooperative and student-centered learning include travel settings such as a hotel and marketplace, talking about health, and describing daily routines and weekend plans. Cultural awareness is expanded with more specific study of the Spanish-speaking world. Students will be required to engage in more challenging discussions in Spanish and English as they use their critical-thinking skills to restate and assess both written texts and recorded passages.

*A grade earned in Spanish 2 will appear on the high school transcript however; it will not be factored into the high school G.P.A.*

### Spanish Immersion Conexiones 8 (immersion only)

Conexiones is a program that ensures continued growth in Spanish language proficiency while cultivating global competencies in students. It consists of a comprehensive, interdisciplinary middle school curriculum. It is designed to support post-immersion and heritage language learners as they transition out of elementary school and prepare for the rigors of middle school and on to high school. The curriculum is project-based and empowers students to use their language skills to complete projects grounded in the Sustainable Development Goals. By working with their local communities and connecting with classrooms abroad, students are cultivating global competencies, learning about different cultures, and gaining the necessary skills to become bilingual global leaders. The Conexiones themes include: Global Society and Culture, Environment and Geography, Access and Equity, and Economic Sustainability. Students will be prepared to take the AAPPL test at the end of grade 8.

### 8th Grade Physical Education (Semester Class)

Physical education is required for all eighth grade students and is based on the North Carolina Essential Standards for Healthful Living. Broken into health education and physical education, middle school students will develop the skills necessary to maintain a healthy and physically active lifelong lifestyle. Health Education standards are broken into five strands, Mental/Emotional Health, Alcohol/Tobacco/Other Drugs, Nutrition/Physical Activity, Interpersonal Relationships/Communication, and Personal/Consumer Health. Physical education standards are broken into four strands, Motor Skills, Movement Concepts, Health Related Fitness, and Personal/Social Responsibility.

## 8th Grade Elective Courses

### Visual Arts 1 Fundamentals

Fundamentals of Art reinforces and builds upon knowledge and skills developed at the elementary and middle school levels. The course is devoted to the study of the elements of art, art criticism, and correct use of materials. Problem solving and decision

making are emphasized throughout the course. Students will have experiences in producing two-dimensional and three-dimensional artworks and are provided a strong foundation in design, drawing, and vocabulary in a teacher-structured environment.

### Orchestra

Orchestra is a class designated to the study of orchestral string instruments. Instrumental choices include the violin, viola, cello, and bass. In this class students will learn how to read music and play their instrument while fostering a love for music literature, theory, and history. Students with a high interest in instrumental music will enjoy this class. No previous musical experience is necessary however, it is important to understand students will be placed in an ability-leveled class.

### Band

Band is a class designated to the study of select woodwind, brass, and percussion instruments. Instrumental choices include: flute, clarinet, alto saxophone, trumpet, and trombone. After a year of band study, a wind player may audition for placement in percussion, at the recommendation of their director. Students in each level of Instrumental Band will learn to play in a concert band atmosphere. No previous musical experience is necessary however, it is important to understand students will be placed in an ability-leveled class.

### Chorus

Chorus is a year-long performance class that teaches the basics of good choral singing and basic musicianship. Students learn and perform a varied repertoire throughout the year that includes songs in different styles and languages, representing different historical periods. In addition to the enjoyment of making music together, they learn how to sing with proper vocal technique and how to read music.

Chorus teaches students the importance and necessity of unity and teamwork. Together they experience the satisfaction of achieving improvement/excellence over time through hard work and discipline. Choir students become sharper listeners, better audience members, and develop an increased appreciation for music. This is a performance-based class, so there will be two required performances throughout the school year. There will also be non-required performance opportunities for students who would like more experience.

### Theatre Arts Beginning: Introduction to Drama and Theatre

This class offers a general overview of theatre, introduces elementary concepts, methods, theatrical terminology, and discipline, and explores the creative process. Students will study the origins of modern drama, and develop basic skills in all areas of theatre. A primary goal of this course is to develop an appreciation and understanding of the history and development of playwriting. Participants are given an opportunity to stretch their imagination, focus creative energy, and work alone and in groups to tell

stories and bring characters to life. Students are encouraged to attend outside performances.

## 8th Grade Semester Elective Courses

### Intro to Pottery

This class will introduce students to building with clay. Focus will be on the handbuilding techniques; pinch, coil and slab with emphasis on functional and sculptural applications. Traditional and historical ceramic arts will be incorporated into each lesson. Research, journal writing, gallery/exhibition setup, are a few of the course expectations outside of working with clay. Students will take -and post progress pictures for grading purposes and portfolio requirements. Various glaze and decoration techniques for finishing work will be covered at length.

*There is a material fee of $20.00 to purchase and replenish glazes. (My Payments Plus)

### STEM - Flight and Space / Medical Detectives

The exciting world of aerospace comes alive through Flight and Space. Students explore the science behind aeronautics and use their knowledge to design, build, and test an airfoil. Custom-built simulation software allows students to experience space travel.

Students play the role of real-life medical detectives as they collect and analyze medical data to diagnose disease. They solve medical mysteries through hands-on projects and labs, measure and interpret vital signs, dissect a sheep brain, investigate disease outbreaks, and explore how a breakdown within the human body can lead to dysfunction.

### Intro to Computer Science Part A or Intro to Computer Science Part B

Students without previous Computer Science experience can sign up for Intro to Computer Science Part A. Students who have previously completed a Computer Science course at PLP (or similar course at another school) are eligible to take Intro to Computer Science Part B. Please see page 9 for a full description of both courses.

*A passing grade earned in both Computer Science A and B will appear on the high school transcript as meeting the computer science graduation requirement; it will not be factored into the high school G.P.A.*