

Our Mission

We prepare students for advanced education, successful careers and responsible citizenship through a commitment to academic excellence and humanitarian ideals.

Students First

We meet individual student needs through a climate that fosters a student-centered experience.

Next Generation Leadership

To be competitive in a global society, students today need the skills for tomorrow. Topeka Collegiate School cultivates the next generation of leaders through character development, a commitment to equity and justice, and global citizenry.

Foundations for Life

Our graduates are known for their broad and varied interests, deep knowledge base, versatile skill sets and intellectual curiosity. Our students develop competencies not just for their next educational step but for a lifelong love for learning.

Our Teaching Philosophy

We believe that students in middle school are capable of enormous social, emotional, and intellectual growth. Our middle school provides a stimulating academic curriculum and appropriate structures for support. This combination enables students to develop good study habits, intellectual curiosity, responsibility for self and others, and leadership skills. Students learn critical thinking and communication skills across the curriculum, in language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, world languages, and Leadership courses.

The core curriculum is complemented by visual arts, music, computer skills, physical education, and a twice-weekly electives curriculum that allows students to explore topics of interest, from competition in Science Olympiad to photography.

Experiential learning is at the core of our middle school teaching philosophy, and extends beyond the classroom for special events, such as the trip to Heifer International's Global Village, or Sea Camp in the Florida Keys. Our middle school program emphasizes learning that is rigorous and relevant, preparing students exceptionally well for high school and beyond.

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Arts

Music

Music classes at Topeka Collegiate School develop the artistic ability of students by fostering creative expression, encouraging problem solving, and promoting cooperation to create something beautiful. The classes teach communication through performance, heighten awareness of other cultures, and promote musical literacy. Perhaps most importantly, the music curriculum encourages a lifelong love of the arts.

Middle school students meet once a week in classes that are mixed in 6th grade and divided between boys and girls in 7th and 8th grades. Every third week, all middle school students together rehearse the music they have been working on separately. A voice interview helps students discover their vocal development and where their voice fits in the chorus. Students sing music of various styles and cultures, apply musical knowledge learned in lower school, and become familiar with both octavo music and SAB or SATB voicing. Students collaborate to create a pleasing vocal sound and learn how to express themselves in performance; choreography, speaking, and instrumental accompaniments are sometimes added. In addition to class participation, students are responsible for turning in music activity points each quarter. Activities are available for all students regardless of their musical interests or abilities.

Students in Grades 4-8 who demonstrate a particular interest in music have the opportunity to join the Topeka Collegiate Youth Choir. This choir rehearses once a week after school for an hour and a half and routinely performs both at school and throughout the community. Choir students also perform at festivals, give a spring musical, and may audition for the Kansas Choral Directors Association Honor Choir.

Visual Arts

Middle school students enjoy art activities that both introduce and review methods, materials, and terminology used throughout the art curriculum at various grade levels. The *Discipline-Based Art Curriculum* concentrates on four areas: art production, art history, art criticism, and aesthetics. Every lesson contains opportunities for personal creativity and builds around a central element such as line, shape, space, texture, value, and color. Each lesson focuses on at least one element of art, since these elements comprise the building blocks upon which art is created. In middle school, a sculptural element is added to the curriculum, and students work more independently on their ideas and projects during class. In April, the school community celebrates students' efforts with a reception at the Middle School Art Show. This rich display of middle school art also provides the perfect gallery-like setting for the 8th graders as they present their individual poetry at the 8th Grade Poetry Coffeehouse.

English/Language Arts

The goal of the Language Arts program is to foster an appreciation for language while carefully developing each student's command of writing, speaking, listening, and reading. Students are challenged to acquire language and evaluation skills that allow them to develop an appreciation for the diversity of human experience. Students learn to research and write with clarity, logic, persuasiveness, creativity, and accuracy. Specifically, students:

- Identify and use the five stages of the writing process
- Identify and solve writing problems related to clarity, unity, and coherence
- Understand and use the 6-trait writing model (ideas, organization, voice, word choice, sentence fluency, and conventions)
- Use elements of literature to understand and analyze pieces of literature
- Write about literature
- Read and respond to what is read

Language Arts 6

In 6th grade, in the area of composition, students focus on adding depth and detail to their writing. Students continue to show growth and expansion in their voice, organization, and mechanics through expository, descriptive, and narrative writing as well as through their creative short stories and poetry. Students are introduced to MLA format using their summer reading projects and are taught five-paragraph essay format as the year progresses. In the area of literature, students read a variety of literary genres and are introduced to literary terms. Highlights include a Hidden Pond Project that incorporates journal writing, poetry, artwork, and mapping; an introduction to the Heifer International Program; written and oral quarterly book reviews; a class novel (*Gathering Blue*), and an introduction to newspaper form.

Language Arts 7

In 7th grade, students continue their study of genre and the elements of literature begun the previous year and focus on literary analysis and writing about the literature they read, with an emphasis on theme. Students undertake literary analysis in class discussions and work on longer papers, including a research paper. Longer works include *Nothing But the Truth*, *Twelve Angry Men*, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, and a novel of choice each quarter. In a unit on poetry, students demonstrate their analytic skills as well as oral presentation skills when they “teach a poem” to the class. The 6-Trait Assessment Model is used to evaluate student writing with grammar review as needed.

Language Arts 8

This class centers on the four- and five-paragraph essay formats, MLA citation, literary analysis and critique, and building on research skills practiced the previous year. Students conduct more in-depth analysis of poetry and poetry writing, culminating in the poetry coffeehouse in May.

Students also write in new forms, for example, memoir and compose profiles in a piece called “Classmates.” Students continue developing sophistication both in their reading and presentations of quarterly book reports. Highlights of the year include:

- Hidden Pond Poetry Unit (Fall)
- 8th Grade Poetry Project (Spring)
- 8th Grade Poetry Coffeehouse (Spring)
- Edgar Allan Poe Thematic Unit
- Final Projects – boards, Power Point presentations, artwork, oral presentations, poems, short stories, and movies
- Concentration of Expository Essay Forms
- Research Paper
- “Classmates” interview and writing project
- Concentration on Oral Presentation
- Fall Reading – *Fahrenheit 451*

Health (Grade 7)

The goal of the 7th-grade health curriculum is to equip students with the information and skills necessary to meet the physical, emotional, and social changes that occur during the middle school years. This age- and developmentally-appropriate curriculum seeks to foster in students an understanding of how their choices affect themselves and others. Students learn about adolescent development and the types of challenges adolescents face. The YMCA Safe Dates curriculum on healthy relationships is featured in the spring. The goals are to provide students with the skills required to negotiate these challenges; to obtain, interpret, and understand basic health information, products, and services; and to make healthy decisions. Students explore their values and consider how their personal choices allow them to conduct themselves in ways that are consonant with those values.

History

History 6: World History

World History is the second year of a two-year sequence on world studies. This course focuses on discovery and change. Major units of study include Early Societies and Culture; ancient India, China, Japan, Greece, and Rome; Medieval Europe, the Golden Age of Islam, and the Renaissance, Reformation, and Enlightenment. Students will learn not only the factual material but also the skills needed to apply what they have learned to the world around them. By utilizing group work, higher order thinking skills, and application activities, students recognize the significance of the past and will learn to think for themselves about what they would like to see for the future. In World History, we will incorporate the Ten Thematic Strands of Social Studies into each unit as promoted by the National Council for Social Studies. Students will participate in virtual fieldtrips, review artifacts and documents in WebQuests, utilize the internet for additional fact discovery and research, and use Google Earth to explore foreign territories.

History 7: US History and Government

Our goal in Seventh Grade Social Studies is to continue building upon and enhancing students' foundations for thinking, writing and speaking as historians and advocates for the past's influence in today's world and the future. In order to accomplish this goal, students will work as group contributors as well as individual achievers, since good citizens not only contribute personally but also as a collective. The scope of our United States History Curriculum starts with the formation of a new government and Constitution, and ends with Civil War Reconstruction. Students will continue using skills introduced in Sixth grade. For example, in unit 4 each student will create a pamphlet that indicates their opinions (Federalist or Anti-Federalist) on the foundation of America's government as an example of propaganda of the times. Then, students will hold a town hall meeting where they will debate their viewpoints.

History 8: The U.S. in the World, 1865 to the Present

This course covers United States history from Reconstruction to the present, but with an emphasis on understanding how developments in the U.S. connect to what's going on in the world. This course builds upon skills taught in the 6th and 7th grades, especially historical "habits of mind," including: constructing and evaluating arguments, using evidence, using documents and other primary data, developing the skills necessary to analyze point of view and context, understanding and interpreting information, understanding diversity of interpretations through analysis of context, point of view, and frame of reference. Effective writing and speaking skills are developed through analytical and creative writing assignments, individual and group projects, and role-play simulations. Highlights of the curriculum include a trip to the Truman Library's White House Decision Center for a simulation on the ending of World War Two, and the Model United Nations Conference.

Languages

Latin 7

This course introduces students to the Indo-European family of languages and to the concept that inflections convey grammatical meaning. Students identify parts of speech and learn declensions of nouns and adjectives and conjugations of regular verbs. They compare the grammatical structures of Latin to those of English and are encouraged to compare them to other Indo-European languages they speak or study, particularly Spanish. A major component of the curriculum is the study of Latin vocabulary and its English derivatives. Students also have the opportunity to read about the gods and goddesses of classical mythology and learn both their Greek and Roman names.

Latin 8

This course is a continuation of the previous year. Texts in Latin become longer and more complex. Students encounter additional forms of declensions and irregular verb conjugations. They continue to build English vocabulary through Latin roots and to compare the structure of Latin and English grammar. Additional readings in classical mythology include nature myths and the tales of heroes such as Perseus and Theseus.

Spanish 6

At the end of 6th grade, students should be able to express feelings, exchange basic personal information, describe and compare people and things, talk about their family and friends, and understand a general text with the help of a dictionary. Throughout the year, students also study the cultural and geographical aspects of different Spanish-speaking countries.

Spanish 7

At the end of the 7th grade, students have the skills to conduct a basic conversation and exchange information. Students have a better understanding of grammatical concepts and irregular verbs. They focus on learning how to communicate in different typical daily situations such as shopping or a visit to the doctor. Students also study some of the phonetic irregularities of the Spanish language and work on more complex translations using authentic sources such as newspapers and magazines. The cultural and geographical study of Spanish-speaking countries continues through the use of texts in Spanish.

Spanish 8

This year culminates in the preparation of the student for his or her high school years. A review covers the main concepts studied previously. More complex grammar such as the use of the subjunctive, direct and indirect objects, and progressive and perfect tenses is added to the curriculum. Students work on increasingly complex conversations and translations and study more sophisticated vocabulary. By the end of the 8th grade, students should be able to

converse with a higher level of detail and should be able to read a Spanish text and understand its basic meaning without using a dictionary. Students also complete the cultural and geographical study of Spanish-speaking countries.

Leadership (Grades 6 and 8)

Sixth and 8th grade students meet once a week by grade level to learn about forms of leadership, strategies for communication, and problem solving. Students pose a range of questions such as: What is leadership? How do we show leadership within the school, both individually and as part of a group? What traits make a good leader? How are leaders supported? How do leaders support each other as a team? This program integrates with the Character Counts pillars.

Mathematics

The main goal of the program is to provide a strong foundation in mathematics through challenging courses that are appropriate to the ages, abilities, and needs of our students. Students who want more challenge have the chance to be part of several competitive teams. All middle school students have the opportunity to participate in the AMC-8 (sponsored by the American Mathematics Competitions). Sixth graders compete in the Math Olympiad, which is a monthly in-class problem-solving competition. Advanced students also compete in the local SUMday competition. The MATHCOUNTS competition is available for advanced students. Topeka Collegiate students have historically been very successful regionally and statewide in these competitions.

Math 6

Sixth-Grade Math

Sixth grade math focuses on arithmetic operations with integers, decimals, fractions, and percents; scientific and exponential notation; data interpretation and the real world; variables in formulas and graphs; number systems and algebra concepts; rates, ratios, probability and proportions; geometry: congruence, construction, triangles, quadrilaterals, parallel lines, perimeter, measurement topics in perimeter, area, and volume.

Transition Math

Transition math includes arithmetic applied to pre-algebra and pre-geometry; arithmetic operations in mathematics and the real world; variables as pattern generalizers, abbreviations in formulas, and unknowns in problems; graphing variable quantities on the number line and the coordinate plane; connecting basic arithmetical and algebraic skills to geometry and measurement topics, including perimeters, areas, and volumes. Graphing calculators are used throughout the course.

Math 7

Transition Math

Topics covered include the following: arithmetic applied to pre-algebra and pre-geometry; arithmetic operations in mathematics and the real world; variables as pattern generalizers, abbreviations in formulas, and unknowns in problems; graphing variable quantities on the number line and the coordinate plane; connecting basic arithmetical and algebraic skills to geometry and measurement topics, including perimeters, areas, and volumes. Graphing calculators are used throughout the course.

Algebra

Topics covered include the following: generalizing patterns and developing algebraic models; solving and graphing linear and quadratic equations, inequalities, and linear systems; studying

and graphing exponential growth and compound interest; using probability to study algebraic fractions, functions, and set ideas; factoring polynomials and polynomial operations. Graphing calculators are used throughout the course.

Math 8

Algebra

Topics covered include: generalizing patterns and developing algebraic models; solving and graphing linear and quadratic equations, inequalities, and linear systems; studying and graphing exponential growth and compound interest; using probability to study algebraic fractions, functions, and set ideas; factoring polynomials and polynomial operations. Graphing calculators are used throughout the course.

Geometry

Topics covered include: coordinate and transformational geometry; measurement formulas for two- and three-dimensional figures; performing basic constructions; similarity and congruence; direct, indirect, and coordinate proofs; right-angle trigonometry; properties of circles.

Physical Education

PE 6

Students in 6th grade lead the class in warm-ups to further leadership skills. There is an increase in the level of conditioning when middle school begins, because the athletic program ties into the physical education program. Conditioning is emphasized because of the need to be healthy and active. Students also participate in a variety of team games as the curriculum is geared more towards group activity.

PE 7

Students in 7th grade also lead in warm-ups and strive to enhance leadership and physical skills through the warm-up activities and stretches that are done. The 7th-grade curriculum continues to focus on team games and activities. There is also an agility unit added to work on speed and quickness during movement.

PE 8

Students in 8th grade focus on leadership and team-building activities throughout the curriculum. During the year, students create a game in which they collaborate with one another for one class period. They then play the game, work out the glitches, and determine the rules for other classes to follow. Along with this, the students are expected to work to improve their agility, strength, conditioning, and competitiveness to ready themselves for physical education classes in high school.

Science

Science 6

The primary goal of the 6th-grade science curriculum is to develop students' understanding of the nature of science. Through a project-based approach, the students learn the fundamental scientific concepts of the life, physical, and earth sciences, so that they are prepared for further study in these disciplines. In addition, the curriculum supports the development of organizational and critical-thinking skills that apply to problem solving in many disciplines. Finally, the curriculum supports the interdisciplinary study of citizenship by discussing the role of science in society and the obligation of scientists as citizens. Highlights include a trip to the Stone Nature Center.

Science 7

This year's curriculum provides detailed instruction about cell processes, including cell reproduction, respiration, and photosynthesis. Students also study heredity, DNA structure, and the transference of traits. In earth science, they increase their understanding of plate tectonics, and learn about volcanoes, earthquakes, and other geological phenomena. Students learn about Earth's place in space and the solar system. In physical science, they consider what is matter, its basic properties, and how does it change. With respect to the environment, students learn about the interactions between nonliving and living ecosystems. A unit on sustainability and resources culminates in their trip to Heifer International Ranch in Arkansas.

Science 8

Eighth graders build on concepts of astronomy previously learned and conduct an in-depth study of the sun, the solar system, and the history of the formation of the solar system as well as its components. They continue to study stars, their life cycles, galaxies, and the types of galaxies in the universe. Students then study ocean ecosystems, including the diversity of living and nonliving components and the threats to these systems. This study culminates in their trip to the Newfound Harbor Marine Institute in Florida (also known as SeaCamp) for five days in the fall. Students expand on their prior study of matter to include atomic structure, understanding the periodic table, chemical bonds, and chemical reactions. They study biotic and abiotic systems at the Stone Nature Center. Eighth graders end the year with a study of human body systems, anatomy, and physiology. This unit includes the dissection of a sheep heart led by a local cardiologist.

Study Skills (Grades 6, 7, and 8)

The goal of Study Skills is to help students become better and more efficient learners. Specifically, the course focuses on:

- Developing critical thinking and problem solving
- Using library sources effectively
- Discriminating between important and unimportant information
- Distinguishing between reliable and unreliable sources
- Taking effective notes
- Using outlines to organize writing
- Utilizing strategies for effective study and test taking
- Improving organization
- Enhancing vocabulary

The two major vehicles for developing these skills are the National History Day project and a study of vocabulary from classical roots. NHD is a contest in which students showcase their historical research related to an annual theme. They present their findings in one of five project categories: exhibit, documentary, performance, historical paper, or website. In the spring students do a unit on vocabulary. Words derived from Greek and Latin roots account for about 60% of the English language. By learning the most common roots, students can unlock the meanings of thousands of words.

Technology

The purpose of technology training is to provide our students with tools to serve them now and in the future. This is accomplished by working with various software packages including the Microsoft Office Suite, Adobe Creative Suite, and the Internet. Emphasis is placed on the need for adaptability in a rapidly changing world. In the three-year sequence students:

- Acquire keyboarding skills – letters, numbers, and keystrokes
- Do word processing – make tables, create lists, format paragraphs, create shading and backgrounds
- Use age-appropriate computer vocabulary
- Identify software to accomplish a task
- Design page layout using publishing software
- Import data and graphics into a document using digital cameras and scanners
- Create, manage, and integrate information through spreadsheets
- Use multiple search engines
- Use appropriate network etiquette
- Negotiate network drives to locate and save information
- Develop speed and accuracy in keyboarding skills
- Cite sources from electronic sources in bibliographical format
- Produce and integrate advanced graphics, video, audio, and text into documents and multimedia presentations

Co-Curricular Activities

Book Buddies

Book Buddies pairs a child from a primary class with a child from an intermediate class. Using the Book Buddy format is a great way to break the ice when meeting for the first time, and the Book Buddy Biography is an important introductory activity to achieve that. In this lesson, students create a personalized biography for their reading buddy, and each child is the author, illustrator, and editor. Book Buddies meet once a month. This program provides an opportunity for older students to become friends with as well as mentors to younger students, one of the benefits of a pre-K to Grade 8 school environment.

Class Plays

Middle school students collaborate with teachers to write short plays that they perform before the whole school in Friday assemblies. The plays often pertain to the curriculum. Students have been performing in assemblies since Pre-K. In middle school, students grow ever more comfortable speaking in front of large groups, preparing them for leadership.

Community Service and Service Learning

The mission of Topeka Collegiate School includes responsible citizenship through a commitment to humanitarian ideals. Compassion, sharing, responsibility, and respect for others are discussed as part of our character education program. The community service program in middle school provides an opportunity for children to reach out to the broader community with a caring spirit and an active willingness to serve. Each middle school class undertakes a different project in the community for each of the first three quarters. Students involved in our community service program will:

- Grow morally
- Become productive and generous citizens
- Develop an awareness of the needs of others
- Develop the core values of respect, responsibility, compassion, cooperation, and service
- Learn to respect and protect the dignity and worth of all members of the community

Electives

Middle school students choose from a range of elective courses offered twice a week. Some courses are academic and others offer a chance for students to do experiential learning, following their own interests. Courses offered change from year to year, and may include: History Day Prep, Extra Math, Mallet Madness (music), Journalism, Law and Order, Science Olympiad, Poetry Drill, Community Garden, Current Events, Personal Finance and the Stock Market, and Photography.

Heifer Ranch – Global Village

Seventh-grade students spend a weekend at Heifer Ranch near Perryville, Arkansas taking part in a hands-on educational program about world hunger and its solutions. Participants in the Heifer Global Village program experience the realities of obtaining shelter, food, water, and firewood and learn the harshness of an existence in which nothing can be taken for granted. Heifer Global Village programs show participants that sometimes having a little means a lot. Whether spending one day in a village representing one of the regions in which Heifer works (Central and Eastern Europe, Africa, Asia/South Pacific, and the Americas) or participating in the more intense programs, visitors are taken through the daily struggles that impoverished people face every day. Heifer's philosophy is that in living the lives of others, you will find that something extraordinary happens. Students' attitudes about individual action, community cooperation, and sustainable solutions for global hunger, poverty, and the environment will be transformed. Students' understanding of the world – and their place in it – will change dramatically.

Hidden Pond and Stone Nature Center

Throughout middle school, students visit the Hidden Pond nature preserve several times a year. They engage in team-building and leadership exercises on the ropes course. They conduct science experiments in the nearby stream. With their Language Arts classes, they reflect on the natural world in a poetry unit. Students also help with the rehabilitation of injured native animals as one of their community service projects.

History Day

National History Day is a contest of historical research sponsored by The History Channel. As part of the middle school curriculum, students in 6th, 7th, and 8th grades research a topic related to an annual theme and present their research in one of five project categories (exhibit, documentary, performance, historical paper, or website). Many students choose to participate in the regional competition. Historically, students from Topeka Collegiate have succeeded in winning awards at the district, state, and national levels of competition.

Interscholastic Sports Program

Topeka Collegiate School offers middle school students the opportunity to participate in four different sports as part of the Topeka Parochial League. All students have the chance to play regardless of prior experience. Sports that take place during the fall season include co-ed soccer and girls and boys volleyball. Boys and girls basketball is offered during the winter, while track and field is offered during the spring. Participation in sports is fun for the students and provides them with learning experiences that help them as they move into high school.

SeaCamp

SeaCamp is one of those “once-in-a-lifetime” experiences for our 8th graders. It is an opportunity to learn about and study the ocean at a level not possible in vacation-type settings. The SeaCamp experience in Florida exposes our students to the marvels of coral reefs, which are described by many scientists as the “rainforests of the ocean” because of their biodiversity and importance to the rest of marine life. SeaCamp culminates a Pre-K to Grade 8 science education that is not found in any other school in this area. The Florida ecosystem that 8th graders personally observe shows many of the indicators of global climate change, from the coral reefs, the mangrove islands, and the lingering hurricane damage to the Everglades and their importance to south Florida and beyond. Furthermore, the SeaCamp experience is one of growth for our students. They become more independent, self-reliant, and self-confident.

Student Council

STUCO teaches valuable life skills including leadership, responsibility, and community service. It accomplishes this in an environment that nurtures a sense of self and community. STUCO undertakes important projects such as sponsoring social activities and aiding local individuals in need. True to the school’s ideals, STUCO supports academic excellence and humanitarianism, preparing students for high school, college, and beyond. It empowers students, bolsters their self-confidence, and gives them the opportunity to serve their peers. STUCO builds strong, independent students who have an appreciation for the workings of democracy.