

ELECTIVES

Our 6th – 8th Grade middle schoolers are offered 3 Electives throughout each year. Each Trimester students will participate in one of three elective courses: STEAM, Drama/Theater, and Newspaper. Each student will experience all three of these electives throughout the year. During the course of each trimester, each elective course will meet a deadline and provide a positive, challenging, collaborative and educational experience for our students. Our elective classrooms are all inclusive combined classes, representing students from all three grades. Please see below for descriptions of our Elective courses.

STEAM is an educational program developed to prepare students for college and graduate study in the fields of science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics (STEAM). In addition to subject-specific learning, STEAM aims to foster inquiring minds, logical reasoning, and collaboration skills. Educators break STEAM down into seven standards of practice, or skill sets, for educating science, technology, engineering, and mathematics students:

- Learn and apply content
- Integrate content
- Interpret and communicate information
- Engage in inquiry
- Engage in logical reasoning
- Collaborate as a team
- Apply technology appropriately

Each year our middle school students will focus on one project during their trimester of STEAM. For the 2016-2017 school year, the project they were challenged with is a Toothpick bridge. Through this project students will work collaboratively in teams to design, construct and build, assess and test the stress level of their bridge.

Drama/Theater In this class, students will be introduced to the basic concepts of theater arts. Students will use various creative drama techniques to build confidence and trust, stimulate imagination, movement, and role-play. Students will learn and use drama and theater vocabulary in class discussions and the activities will specifically address the promotion and reinforcement of students' literacy skills. Students will focus on realistic acting, commanding audience attention, and developing a stage presence. They will understand and follow stage directions, and use proper techniques for body and voice control. Students will learn and discuss the basic elements of drama to better understand and analyze characters and scripted material. Students will exhibit and reinforce their skills through individual and group presentations, performances, and script and journal writing.

Newspaper is designed to give students a basic understanding of journalism and newspaper writing techniques. Students will write, edit, and layout issues of our school newspaper, La Stampa. La Stampa is an Italian daily newspaper published in Turin, Italy. It is distributed in Italy and other European nations. It is one of the oldest newspapers in Italy. In 1895, the newspaper was bought and edited by Alfredo Frassati, father of Pier Giorgio Frassati, who gave it its current name and a national perspective.

Students in this course do all the work for publication of each issue of the paper. Students will develop their writing abilities and editing skills by creating several articles for the school paper. Students will also develop skills in photography. The course will cover school happenings throughout the school day and year, as well as some out-of-school time for news coverage on additional school sponsored events.