

# Middle School



## GRADES 4–6

By Middle School, our students have become consolidated learners, adeptly moving from the concrete to the abstract. They experience a program that cultivates confidence and self-sufficiency, building the skills that will ensure that they become independent learners, articulate advocates for themselves and their work, and motivated individuals and community members. They engage more fully in our arts and athletics program, and are challenged by an increasingly vigorous academic program. As their passion for learning and world view expands, they benefit tremendously from the fact that Berkshire Country Day School offers the resources of a larger school with the intimacy and sustained connections of a smaller one.

### Program & Curriculum Highlights

- Middle School homeroom teachers in Grades 4–6 serve as advisors for a group of students in their respective grades, keeping abreast of their advisees' progress throughout the school year by soliciting information from other teachers and from meeting with their students on a regular basis. The focus is on positive personal growth, goal setting, and self reflection, and individual and group topics include respect, responsibility, courage, value systems, decision-making, tolerance, excellence, success, manners, and service.
- Middle School students spend about one third of their week in English/ Language Arts and Social Studies/ History classes, often combining the two into integrated humanities lessons and projects that extend context and deepen their learning.
  - The English curriculum stresses the development of excellent written and analytical skills and the interpretation of a range of texts (fiction, nonfiction, poetry, etc.), with extensive reading of literature and frequent writing assignments.
  - The Social Studies program focuses on exploration and discovery; ancient cultures; and global, political, and cultural geography and the richness of our diverse and changing world.
- The Math curriculum focuses on proficiency, and major topics include numeracy, pre-algebra, data analysis, and geometry, offering a solid preparation for advanced classes in Upper School.
- Our laboratory-based Science program emphasizes scientific methodology, including design and engineering, conducting experiments, documenting processes and observations and creating lab reports. Units on rocketry and robotics are just some of the highlights of Middle School Science.
- Following the introduction of French and Spanish, students in Middle School choose one of these languages to concentrate on as a core academic subject from fourth grade forward. Both are conducted predominantly in the target language. Latin is added in Grade 6 as the second required language. An intentional component in our curriculum, we believe Latin enhances practically every other subject area and strengthens students' communication, processing, and evaluative skills as they gain an appreciation for classic literature and ancient history.
- Our robust studio arts program fully leverages the rich cultural landscape of the Berkshires, and instructors are practicing artists and musicians. Classes include painting and drawing, mixed media, ceramics, 3D design, and woodworking, chorus, music theory and instrumental instruction, and theater arts. Middle School Band offers opportunities to perform as part of an ensemble that features a variety of instruments and range of abilities.
- Field trips take students on day trips to area theaters, museums, farms, and other sites connected to curricular themes. Extended, overnight field trips begin in Grade 4, with a "Night at the Museum" in Boston, MA, and also include a four-day trip to Nature's Classroom in Rhode Island for Grade 5 and to the Hulbert Outdoor Center in Vermont for Grade 6.
- Team sports begin in Grade 4 as a mix of intramural and competitive matches and include soccer, cross-country skiing, and lacrosse. In addition, students through Grade 6 participate in weekly physical education classes that develop coordination, teamwork, and general fitness.