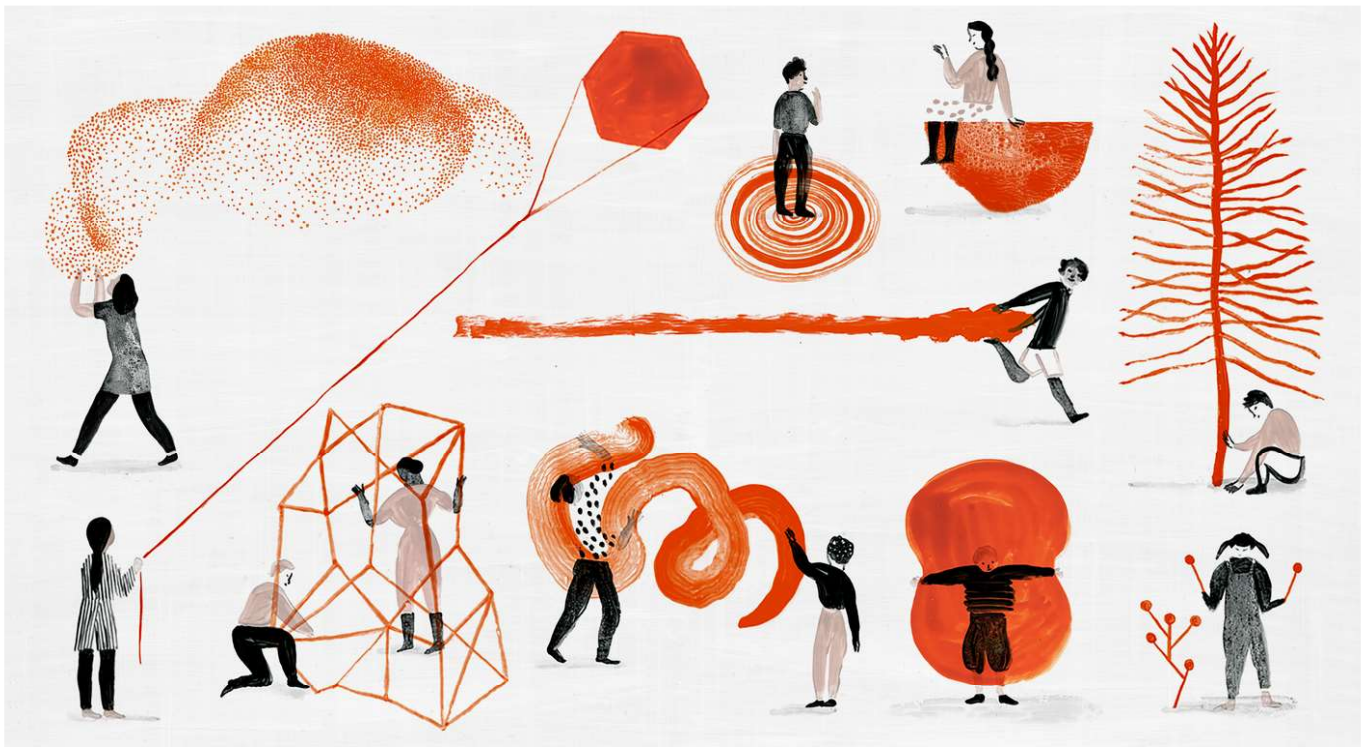


Whittle

SCHOOL & STUDIOS



2021-2022

Middle School Overview

**WHITTLE SCHOOL & STUDIOS
WASHINGTON, DC CAMPUS**

3400 INTERNATIONAL DRIVE NW, WASHINGTON DC, 20008 | 202-417-3615 | WWW.DC.WHITTLESCHOOL.ORG

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Our Mission

Our hopes are high, and by them we are bound together. We aim to create an extraordinary and unique school, the first truly modern institution serving children from ages three to 18 and the first global one. We want to change for the better the lives of those students who attend and, beyond our own campuses, contribute to the cause of education on every continent. We measure our merit not through the narrowness of exclusivity but through the breadth of our impact.

Favoring our work is an emerging canon of best practices pioneered by educators who have come before us. They have taught us that a modern school recognizes that how one learns will outlast what one learns, ending lock-step, one-size-fits-all education. The Whittle Schools understand that the emotional development of their students must also be given time and sees that an ingenious facility is an ongoing lesson in design. We believe that a global system of schools will surpass a single, local one and harness the power of our new digital age. We pledge to reconceptualize the school day and year recognizing that learning happens everywhere and anytime.

Our graduates will stand out. Grounded by rigor and knowledge, they will be undaunted, creative, and bold, ready to lead or help in the wholly transformed and challenging world of their future. Each will shine in at least one loved, purposeful pursuit in which he or she will achieve excellence and a resulting lifelong confidence. All will speak other languages and study in other cultures yet remain deeply connected to their homeland. Surrounded by an expansive and diverse collective intelligence, they will forever be members of it. And through carefully carving their own character they will help goodness prevail.

Our faculty will be learners too, side by side our students. We will choose faculty because they want to guide children and have skill in and passion for their academic disciplines. They will choose us because our global scale brings them unequalled professional development; our growth provides them growth; and our rewards for them are commensurate with the great good education brings to society.

We thank those who have generously supported us, and we look forward to sharing our work with all who aspire to reimagine education.



Core Values

DARE TO IMAGINE

Our hopes are high because we are not afraid of change. We dare to challenge current paradigms, to search out great thinking and practices, and to relentlessly imagine how things could be better tomorrow than they are today.

HONOR POTENTIAL

We believe that each human being has magnificent potential. We see the uniqueness and value in every one of us, and continually look for ways to strengthen and grow that individuality.

FORGE CONNECTIONS

We are better when we are connected. We draw strength from relationships. For this reason we commit ourselves to building meaningful bonds—local and global ones—deepening our understanding of both ourselves and the world.

Learner Profile

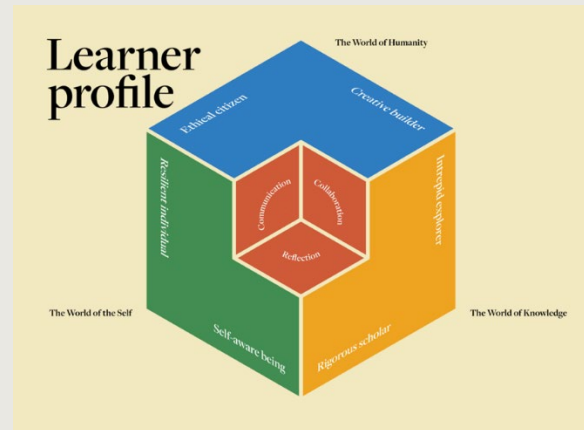
We consider everyone in our community a learner – be they student, parent, teacher, or staff. It is a deeply-held belief, given shape through our universal learner profile – the foundation for our education design.

This holistic profile also serves as a personal guide to the characteristics we want to embody when interacting with others and the areas in which we want to grow and develop.

Our goal is for our graduates to embody the ideals in our learner profile: In order to face the challenges and opportunities of the 21st century, students need to learn more than just course content. Central to our approach is the consideration of what our graduates will need to make a meaningful contribution to the world. Whittle School & Studios students will learn how to solve problems in creative ways, how to work well with others, how to research and synthesize information, and how to apply their learning to real-world problems. They will be firmly rooted in their

own culture while gaining great respect for and knowledge of other cultures.

Every aspect of the curriculum, down to the way the daily schedule is structured, is built around ensuring that students are fully developed in three spheres of life:



Learning Philosophy

We Believe:

- that education must advance to meet the needs of a new era.
- that students learn and grow best when they are at the center of their learning.
- that curiosity and exploration lie at the foundation of learning.
- in students as agents—makers, problem-solvers, and innovators.
- that true mastery comes through active engagement, collaborative experiences, and deep immersion rather than passive reception.
- in teachers as both experts and lifelong learners who understand the science, art, and craft of teaching and seek always to improve their practice.

In order to reflect these beliefs, our learning experiences – from curriculum to scheduling – are designed based on a strong academic foundation, student interests, depth and breadth of experiences, and, most importantly, active learning strategies such as Project-Based Learning (PBL) that allow for students to learn important knowledge and skills, apply them to novel situations, and reflect actively on the educational process.

Assessment Philosophy

Assessment at Whittle School & Studios is integral to all teaching and learning and reflects the school's mission statement. It has a number of purposes. As well as supporting curricular goals, assessment encourages a holistic approach to student learning. Assessment is integrated into all teaching and learning, and is an ongoing process, where teachers identify students' needs for support to improve the teaching and learning process. Students are encouraged to see and understand assessment as a way of developing their own learning.

OVERALL ASSESSMENT GUIDELINES

All forms of assessment should be varied. The assessment tasks both at the end of the learning period and during the learning process should enable the teacher to gather information about the students from a range of perspectives. The tasks should not be solely about the recall of factual knowledge. The variety of tasks should reflect the nature of the subject and give evidence of student understanding through authentic performance. The tasks will also be varied so that they closely match the subject-group objectives.

Assessment should be appropriate. The tasks should be age appropriate and reflect development of the student through the subject. The tasks should aim to reflect the diversity of students studying at Whittle. The tasks should reflect a variety of learning styles.

It is the task of the teacher to make assessment understandable, accessible and sufficiently rigorous. A good summative task should reflect the abilities within a class and the majority of students should be able to achieve a level described in the descriptor. Open-ended tasks may ensure that students are able to reach the highest level on the rubric. The requirements of summative tasks should be made clear to students using task-specific clarifications. Students who have special educational needs and who may not be able to meet the objectives can have tasks which are modified. Students and parents should be informed of this. Wherever possible, summative tasks should be internally moderated in order to ensure standardization.

Assessment at Whittle is reported regularly using a mixture of comments and mastery ratings. Written comments provide students and parents with actionable feedback that focuses on constant growth. In determining the mastery ratings per specific learning outcome, the teacher uses a 'best-fit' model to judge performance in each of the outcomes. The Mastery ratings will reflect the teacher's professional and informed judgement of the student's abilities. This will be based on a range of evidence gathered through the year. Teachers pay careful attention to patterns in the data such as improving performance, consistency, and mitigating circumstances.

With students who require learning support, the school may develop an individualized learning plan where objectives are modified. This will be reflected in the report.

QUALITY FEEDBACK

Feedback provided by teacher on assessments are:

- **Timely:** It is provided when the student is in the learning process and there's still time for improvement.
- **Informative and constructive:** It focuses constructively on one or more strengths of the work, identifies areas for growth, informs the student of their mastery progress and provides at least one suggestion for the next step.
- **Clear and specific:** It is specific so the student knows what to do next and provides sufficient applicable and actionable feedback and information to act upon on the next assessment.
- **Differentiated:** It meets the needs of each student with respect to the current work. For some students, a reminder is all that is needed for a next step; others may need prompts or examples.



Grading

At Whittle School we use the Mastery based approach to assessing student performance. We believe that assessment should indicate the depth of skill a student has achieved in a subject area rather than be a judgement of intelligence or innate capacity. At the end of a course, students will also receive an overall mastery rating in addition to the mastery rating per learning outcome. This final rating will not be an average of ratings but a final assessment of the student's overall performance, which is informed by both assignments and teacher professional judgment. **These mastery ratings should not be impacted by student behavior, work ethics, effort, and the like.** Such aspects of the learning process should absolutely be reported but not through academic ratings. The advisors' comments should contain information related to these areas.

MASTERY BASED PROGRESSION

MASTERY: This indicator represents the highest level of achievement for a learning outcome. In order to reach this level, the student must demonstrate this outcome more than once and preferably across multiple contexts.

SATISFACTORY PROGRESS: This indicator represents that a student, as expected, has made good progress and that with more time and attention by the student and teacher should be able to reach the "Mastery" level. The student is well prepared to move ahead, and progress will be reviewed over the next marking period on this indicator.

MORE PROGRESS NEEDED: This indicator represents that a student has not yet made the expected progress. Significant effort must be made by the student and school to ensure that the student will make greater progress. A learning plan or other interventions may need to be put into place to scaffold the student's success.

NO CREDIT: Has not completed the necessary coursework to be assessed.

WITHDRAW: Has withdrawn from the course.

The Whittle Middle School

Middle School students are beginning to make critical and complex life choices, and they are forming the attitudes, values, and dispositions that will direct their behavior as adults.

They deserve an education that will enhance their healthy growth as lifelong students, ethical and democratic citizens, and increasingly competent, self-sufficient individuals who are optimistic about the future and prepared to succeed in our ever-changing world.

Our Middle School approach is based on the pedagogy that every child:

- Has the capacity to learn, grow, and develop into a knowledgeable, reflective, caring, ethical, and contributing citizen
- Must be engaged in learning that is relevant, challenging, integrative, and exploratory
- Faces significant life choices and needs support in making wise and healthy decisions
- Thrives academically, socially, and emotionally in a participatory learning environment where trust and respect are paramount, and where family and community are actively involved

Hence, our Middle School Program is structured to meet the varied intellectual and developmental needs of adolescents. Some of the main elements of our learning program include an academically rigorous curriculum, an advisory program addressing the social-emotional needs of adolescents, a pedagogical approach that is student-centered giving students an active role in the learning experience, and an experiential learning program providing students with opportunities to engage in service-oriented experiences in our wider DC community.

We strongly believe that Middle School is not a mere preparatory process for the Upper School years and college. We believe we must assist students in the learning, application and internalization of knowledge, skills and qualities that will ultimately define the quality of life they live and the positive role they will have in society.

We encourage students to apply themselves fully in all that they do as we offer support and guidance in a caring and positive environment.

MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENT SCHEDULE

Our schedule for the 2021-2022 school year has been designed to meet the following needs:

- Maintaining a later start of the day
- Adding free unstructured time
- Building in of Whole-Group Advisory time
- Expanding our Physical Literacy – Health and Wellbeing program
- Strengthening our Creative Arts & Design Program
- Establishing Math and Humanities as the core subjects of the academic program
- Adding Civics with a focus on service

Our Schedule is broken into two weeks – Week A and Week B. Our day starts at 9AM, as research suggests this is the time when adolescents

are most attentive and with greater ability to learn and retain knowledge and skills. Right after lunch, we have our Flex Period that is intentionally designed for students to receive more individualized support whether they need to be further challenged or supported. This is also a time for students to meet with the advisors to support both academic and holistic growth.

One important change for the 2021-2022 school year is the removal of a defined period for X-day. This is an opportunity for us to improve our experiential learning program. X-days are still at the core of the learning experience, but this change will allow for them to be more aligned with the curriculum of the different subject areas. This will ensure that they represent an expansion of the in-classroom learning experience. It is also important to highlight that active learning strategies are not only present on X-day but throughout all subject areas.

Middle School Sample Student Schedule (2-week rotation)

Week A					
	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
9:00 - 10:10	Humanities	Math	PE / Health and Wellbeing	Creative Arts & Design	Math
10:20 - 11:30	Science	World Languages	Humanities	Math	Whole-Group Advisory
11:40 - 12:10	Flex Period – Interest Clubs /Acceleration / Speakers and Assembly				
12:10 - 12:40	Lunch				
12:40 - 1:10	Recess				
1:20 - 2:30	Math	Civics	Science	World Languages	Humanities
2:40 - 3:50	PE / Health and Wellbeing	Creative Arts & Design	Math	Humanities	Science

Week B					
	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
9:00 - 10:10	Humanities	Science	World Languages	Humanities	Math
10:20 - 11:30	Creative Arts & Design	Math	Humanities	Science	World Languages
11:40 - 12:10	Recess				
12:10 - 12:40	Lunch				
12:40 - 1:10	Flex Period – Interest Clubs /Acceleration / Speakers and Assembly				
1:20 - 2:30	Math	PE / Health and Wellbeing	Creative Arts & Design	Civics	Humanities
2:40 - 3:50	World Languages	Humanities	Math	Whole-Group Advisory	Creative Arts & Design



The Middle School Academics at a Glance

HUMANITIES (ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND WORLD HISTORY)

In Middle School, our curriculum integrates English Language and Literature with the study of World History, where the English skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening are woven into the study of World History and Geography. This integration allows for students to have a better understanding of historical periods while reading and writing about that period as well. Being able to develop the reading and writing skills based on a certain place and time in history is a unique opportunity that leads to greater depth and higher levels of understanding. In grade 9, this subject group becomes 2 separate ones: English Language & Literature, and Individuals & Societies.

MATH

Our mastery-based program seeks to develop sophisticated and flexible mathematical thinkers who understand both the power and limitations of mathematics as a tool to describe and make sense of the world. True mathematical sophistication requires creative, critical, and logical thinking. Students in our program go beyond basic skill development and fluency to master computational thinking, mathematical modeling, problem seeking and solving, data analysis and visualization, reasoning and logic, financial literacy, and creative expression through mathematics. Above all, they partake of the joy and wonder of using math to create, collaborate, communicate, and think critically about the world around them.

SCIENCE

Science classes will adopt an integrated approach by addressing topics from biology, chemistry, physics, and earth & environmental sciences throughout Middle School. Our Middle School students will have the opportunity to learn and apply their knowledge and skills to interdisciplinary projects allowing for greater relevance and understanding of the scientific process. This program pushes students to apply the scientific thinking to all areas of life while utilizing the learned skills towards the designing of solutions to problems faced worldwide.

WORLD LANGUAGES

Cultural competencies are central to our mission. Our program is designed to teach children about world languages and culture, using language as a tool for gaining insight into cultural beliefs and practices as well as for communication. The goal is to enable students to actively and comfortably participate in a world language cultural environment. Chinese and Spanish are the languages we currently offer inside the regular schedule.

PHYSICAL LITERACY – HEALTH AND WELLBEING

The aim of the physical education program is to create the disposition to be physically active for life coupled with experiencing the joy of movement. Physical education in Middle School will expose students to a myriad of activities with the concept of physical literacy at the center. Additionally, our program also tackles the need to teach and explore all components of a healthy life. We strongly believe that this program provides students with the opportunity to be better informed about their physical and mental wellbeing.

CREATIVE ARTS AND DESIGN (CAD)

Our CAD program is composed of Performing Arts, Visual Arts, and Information Technology & Design. In the 2021-2022 school year, our MS students will be exposed to these subjects through a trimester rotation. This allows for students to learn the varied skills that these different subjects provide. This also allows for students to go into Upper School with a better notion of what area of the creative arts best interests them.

CIVICS

In our Civics class, our goal is to develop a comprehensive understanding of what it means to be a responsible citizen that is inquisitive, open to dialogue, action driven, and aware of his/her duties and responsibilities. We will work together as a class to debate about societal issues, research about possible solutions, design, and implement a community action plan that benefits the local and global community.



The Middle School Advisory Program

ADVISORY AND ADVISOR

Advisory brings wisdom and research from multiple disciplines together with the Whittle mission in order to inspire, educate, and empower students to engage thoughtfully and contribute meaningfully to their communities near and far. Whittle Schools and Studios strives to foster the holistic development of its students, supporting their personal, social, emotional and intellectual needs. As an education institution, we understand that in order to graduate students who are prepared for college, career and responsible citizenship in the 21st century, we must offer more than academic instruction; we must address students holistically and promote physical and mental health as well as social and emotional development. A school is more than an institution of learning; it is a place where young people form their identities and learn how to have healthy, successful relationships of all kinds, with each other and with adults.

As educators, one of our first responsibilities is to offer opportunities for authentic relationships between young people and adults to develop. This foundation of trust and mutual respect will spur the growth of thriving ecosystems in which students have choice, voice and agency. An intentionally designed advisory structure builds community, provides students with a safe environment, and forms the basis of a student-centered school where all students have a trusted adult invested in their success and know their contributions and perspectives are valued. The advisor can also be a supportive person for parents to contact when they need to. Being a parent can be a complex and difficult thing and parents should not feel that they have to parent alone. A caring advisor can help the whole family to have the best school experience at Whittle School.

Advisory is an approach.

Advisory is not a single experience, but a combination of several different practices encouraging a student's academic and holistic growth. These are:

1. **Classroom Teaching and Learning-** A teacher's formal and informal interactions, their teaching and learning practices and pedagogies, as well as their feedback and

assessment practices should reflect an advisory approach that is growth oriented and shows their care for the students in their charge.

2. **Advisory Class/Morning Meeting-** Each week during a dedicated time, students are together in a group, which gives them opportunities to develop social, emotional and metacognitive skills. These are intentionally designed and an integral part of our learning experiences at Whittle.
3. **One-on-one meetings With Advisees -** One-on-one meetings with individual students are an important way that advisors establish rapport and trust with their advisees. These meetings generally occur bi-weekly. They always start with a simple questionnaire to connect with students and understand how they are feeling.
4. **Reporting and Communication-** The advisor is the primary person parents should call with questions and information the school needs to know. Each advisor is assigned approximately 12 advisees. Reporting and communication includes holding parent teacher conferences and helping the students develop and curate portfolios each trimester.

The integration of these four areas becomes the advisory experience. Relevant and important, these areas individually and together create a sum greater than its parts.

At the beginning of every month, our teachers receive a set of activities and guidance to lead the advisory sessions under a specified theme that is both relevant and engaging. In order to keep parents informed about the direction of advisory that month, parents receive a letter containing the overall objectives for both the whole-group advisory sessions and the individual sessions.



The Flex Period

ACHIEVING MORE WITHIN THE SCHOOL DAY

We have moved our Flex Period to the middle of the school day to give it more structure and relevance. This allows for the Flex period to be a time when complementary activities can take place as well as an opportunity to accelerate students in their own learning.

The Flex Period weekly structure will be as follows:

1. **Interest Clubs** – On Mondays and Wednesdays, the Flex Period will contain both teacher and student-led clubs which allow for students to pursue their interests, explore new passions and apply their learning actively. Examples of clubs to take place during this time are: eSports, Model United Nations (MUN), Robotics, Math and Science Olympics, Choir, Athletics, Second-language conversation groups, Debate, Chess, Improvisation. The specific offerings will be created with students and teachers at the beginning of the school year. Some may last for the entire year or other periods of time. Some may be entirely new while others will be a continuation of projects from last year such as our Debate Club.
2. **Acceleration** – On Tuesdays and Thursdays, the Flex period is an opportunity for students to connect with their classroom teachers as an effort to ensure they have this extra time to solve doubts, follow up on classroom activities or simply challenge themselves in a more individualized way. Important to highlight that this is not the only opportunity when a student's specific needs will be handled individually. Our teaching and learning approach already promotes personalization strategies in all classes through tiered and differentiated activities to meet students where they are at. This period is also not another class per se but an opportunity to build on the work already being developed in the classroom at a different pace.
3. **Speaker of the week / Assembly** – On Fridays, in collaboration with our Student Council, we hope to host weekly speakers allowing us to draw from the wealth of

knowledge that our closer and wider community possess. The topics will vary. They may be related to current events, projects that students may be developing, career presentations. Our goal is to start the year drawing from our faculty and parent body. This day will also be used for Divisional Assemblies which may be Middle and Upper School together or separately. These presentations will also but not solely be aligned with advisory themes and monthly academic themes such as Black History Month and National Hispanic History Month.

This Flex Period structure will enhance the overall learning experience by providing intentionally designed activities to the school day while providing students with opportunities to listen to experts, individualize their learning and explore their passions.

