

North Star Montessori Academy's Middle School Program

North Star Montessori Academy's middle school program builds upon the principles and methods developed by Maria Montessori, an Italian physician and educator, in the early 20th century. Montessori education is known for its child-centered approach, individualized learning, and emphasis on fostering independence and self-directed exploration. While the Montessori method is more commonly associated with early childhood education, many schools, including NSMA, have extended its principles into middle school levels to maintain continuity in a child's learning journey.

Here are some key characteristics and features of NSMA's middle school program:

Child-Centered Learning: NSMA's Middle School prioritizes the needs and interests of each student. Teachers act as guides, observing the students' progress and offering appropriate learning materials and experiences tailored to their individual abilities and learning styles.

Prepared Environment: The classroom is thoughtfully designed to facilitate learning and encourage exploration. It is equipped with a variety of hands-on materials that help students grasp abstract concepts and develop critical thinking skills.

Freedom with Responsibility: Students are given a degree of freedom to choose their activities within the boundaries set by the curriculum and guidelines. This freedom allows them to take ownership of their learning and fosters a sense of responsibility for their actions.

Multi-Age Classrooms: Similar to our elementary Montessori program, our middle school classrooms include a mix of ages, covering the early adolescent years (around ages 12-15) or 6th through 8th grade. This mixed-age dynamic allows for peer learning, collaboration, and social development.

Self-Paced Learning: Students are encouraged to progress through the curriculum at their own pace, rather than being confined to grade levels. This approach accommodates various learning speeds and ensures that each student receives the support they need. Students who excel in certain academic areas are encouraged to move forward to master higher grade-level content.

Focus on Real-World Connections: NSMA's Middle School curriculum emphasizes real-world applications of knowledge and learning experiences that connect academic subjects to practical life situations.

Holistic Development: NSMA values the development of the whole child – intellectual, emotional, social, and physical. Students are encouraged to explore various interests, engage in extracurricular activities, and develop a sense of empathy and community.

Emphasis on Practical Life Skills: NSMA Middle School students are exposed to practical life skills, such as time management, organization, problem-solving, and communication, which are essential for their future development and success.

Minimal Use of Standardized Testing: NSMA's Middle School program avoids excessive use of standardized testing and instead relies on ongoing observation, assessment, and feedback to monitor a student's progress.