

## *In this book . . .*

### Acknowledgments

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*Parent and Student Reflections featured throughout*

## CSA: A Home for the Mind

***“ In a school that is a home for the mind there is an inherent faith that all people can continue to improve their intellectual capacities throughout life; that learning to think is as valid a goal for the “at risk”, handicapped, the disadvantaged, and the foreign-speaking as it is for the gifted and talented, and that all of us have the potential for even greater creativity and intellectual power.”*** —Arthur L. Costa

The CSA Middle School Program is designed in both structure and curriculum to meet the needs of the young adolescent student. At CSA we are invested in the development of the whole child: intellectual, social / emotional, physical, and character development. The learning environment of the middle school is characterized by high expectations for quality work and academic performance within a need fulfilling framework that is based on knowledge of the development of the young adolescent student.

Early adolescence is an exciting period of growth and development, yet often mercurial in its manifestation on a day to day basis. It is a time when students are actively seeking their independence, yet very much in need of support and guidance by significant adults in their lives. It can be a time marked by extremes: for example, an adolescent student may feel very confident at one moment, and moments later – very vulnerable. Early adolescence is a journey (often marked by confusion) of seeking to define one’s identity, while simultaneously building a strong *inner locus of control* and confidence that leads to successful independence in school and life.

The intellectual development of the adolescent student is a very important component of an exemplary middle school program. In order for the student to safely navigate the unique challenges of early adolescence, the student must be encouraged to use his intellect (thinking) to solve problems and address issues that are presented in his school and home life. At CSA we place a emphasis on the intellectual growth of our students; within the construct of the middle school program we constantly ask students to critically think at a higher level. We nurture the following intelligent behaviors (Costa, 1991):

- persistence
- curiosity
- empathic listening
- flexible thinking
- making connections
- checking for accuracy
- drawing on past knowledge & applying it to new situations
- efficacy as a thinker
- making thoughtful choices
- problem solving
- risk taking
- a sense of humor
- precision of language
- use of all senses
- ingenuity

We strive to create integrated and cross-disciplinary learning experiences where the students must use intelligent behaviors to make the necessary connections that build a conceptual understanding of academic content, and social situations that challenge them.

As the CSA Middle School continues to increase in enrollment, we will add curricular extensions to the program. During the 2004-05 school year we will have foreign language at all levels in the program, as well as the new component for the academically gifted student. The addition of future curricular extensions will reflect an emphasis on the intellectual development of the middle school student.

Shelley Stockwell  
Principal

***“It is important to distinguish between a curriculum which is academic in focus and a curriculum which is intellectual in focus. Some people think you either have an academic curriculum or a social curriculum. The alternative to an academic curriculum is an intellectual one which has to do with the life of the mind as it struggles to make sense of important things. As a nation we tend to over estimate children academically and under estimate them intellectually.”*** — Dr. Lillian Katz, Psychologist & Educator

***“CSA helped me to learn how to THINK; I can think things through in my head. I have noticed that lots of kids in my high school don’t seem to do that.”***

*– Ryan Stephen, CSA 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Graduate 2003*

## CSA: Best Educational Practice

When touring CSA with prospective families, we are often asked: “*What makes CSA different from other public schools?*” The implementation of a variety of research-based best practices such as multi-age classrooms, differentiation of instruction, team teaching, using a variety of assessments to drive instruction and measure understanding, an active and engaging approach to learning, a balanced instructional approach, and the use of a curriculum that encourages students to make connections while learning are a few of the best practices that are in place in the CSA Middle School program.

The Navigator, Voyager, and Middle School classrooms are multi-age. In Navigator, the curriculum spans what is typically first and second grade, in Voyager, third, fourth, and fifth grade curriculum is represented, and our Middle School includes sixth, seventh, and eighth grade. This structure allows students to accelerate beyond the typical grade level expectations. Research shows that teachers who teach in multi-age classrooms are more likely to view their students as individuals and look for differences between students rather than identify them as a group of students working at one grade level. Multi-age classrooms also encourage students to accept and work with others cooperatively.

Multi-age classrooms require instruction to be differentiated for the needs of each student. CSA teachers meet the variety of strengths and needs that each child brings to the classroom by scaffolding the learning activities that occur and by paying attention to the variety of learning styles of the students. Teachers create activities that allow every student to practice skills at their own independent and instructional levels; these activities encourage students to demonstrate knowledge at a “comfortable intensity” level. Students know which activity is designed to meet their specific needs, and are often encouraged to stretch their learning by doing activities that will extend their

learning at the next level. In Middle School, students complete projects using a Layered Curriculum approach, which allows students to plan the depth and breadth of knowledge they’ve learned, as well as allowing them to choose the method they will use to share what they learned.

Teachers work with each other in instructional teams at CSA. Team teaching provides a collaborative and cooperative atmosphere. Teachers grow further as professionals due to the sharing of knowledge and instructional styles. Placing two teachers with different areas of expertise benefits all students. Team teaching also allows for better differentiation of student needs; teachers who team are better able to individualize instruction.

**“There is no doubt that our children will be exposed to the realities of the big world soon enough. CSA allowed them a little more time to prepare and mature before they faced the masses of peer pressure.”** – Parent of former and current CSA students

CSA utilizes a variety of assessment tools in the middle school program. Each year each student is assessed twice in reading and math using the Performance Series assessment, which is a standardized assessment tool. Students are assessed in reading each term using the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA), a tool which allows teachers to closely examine which strategies an individual uses to decode words as well as comprehend text. Teachers also use rubrics to assess students completion of projects; these rubrics also provide students with the expected outcomes of the specific project. Teachers also use observations and anecdotes to document student progress. Unit assessments are also used to check for understanding of concepts that have been taught. Assessment is used to check for understanding and to

guide the instruction that occurs in the classroom.

An active and engaging approach to learning is another practice CSA strives to incorporate. Students engage in experiences that incorporate multiple modalities and learning styles. Teachers strive to provide experiences where students go beyond worksheets and demonstrate their learning in a constructive way that incorporates higher level thinking. CSA also provides a balance of instructional formats throughout each day: students engage in large group, small group and individual activities each day. This is another way that instructional needs of all of our students are met. The instructional practices incorporated in our Middle School program encour-

age students to make cross-content and cross-curricular connections. Teachers also build connections between what is being taught and its importance. Students understand the relevance of what they are learning and how it applies to their previous knowledge and life experiences.

In order to provide every child with the optimal learning experience, CSA incorporates a variety of research-based best practices. These practices allow students to grow and learn to their fullest potential. CSA teachers rely on these practices, backed by extensive research and continuous training, they are able to meet the individual needs of each and every student they interact with daily in their classrooms.

***“(CSA) is a great place to learn. They let you expand your learning, where some middle schools won’t. I have a safe, friendly, welcome feeling always with me.”***

*– CSA Graduate, Class of 2000*

## Smart Character Choices & the Middle School Student

Beginning this school year (2003-04) CSA began implementing our character education program:

**Smart Character Choices.** There are six character traits that create the backbone of this program: **respect, responsibility, work ethic, optimism, kindness and getting along.** School-wide and class-specific procedures and protocols are a fundamental component of this program.

Teachers incorporate the character traits when teaching and reinforcing procedures and protocols. Rather than having specific rules, we use procedures and protocols to help organize our school environment. Some of the *procedures* include moving through the school buildings, taking care of the classrooms and use of the playground. Introducing yourself and demonstrating attention in large groups are examples of *protocols* that are taught throughout the school. These proce-

dures and protocols become routines that the students use to safely and respectfully navigate the school environment each day.

In our Middle School classes, students learn about the character traits throughout the day. Teachers incorporate the character traits into lessons in all subject areas, especially in language arts and social studies. We have also begun to pilot American History lessons that incorporate the six character traits.

During the 2004-05 school year, the *Smart Character Choices* program will be fully implemented at CSA. Student social skills, as demonstrated by following procedures and exhibiting appropriate social protocols, will be at a higher level of expectation. We will also be incorporating our American History units throughout the year.

***“We believe that the character development and self evaluation programs helped our childred define who they were. Our job as parents at home were highly complimented by the environment at CSA and I am confident that we could not have made a better choice for our children.”***

*– Parent of current and former CSA students*

## *Adolescent Characteristics – What’s going on?*

In our nation’s middle schools run in a wide verity of developmental needs, according to Chip Wood in his book *Yardsticks*. These needs should be the foundation for every choice we make in our classrooms and schools. With the fast paced life we tend to live, and the increase of violence in the media, too often we forget to let our kids be kids. Our 11, 12, 13 and 14 year olds should be treated as just that. Strange and magical changes are taking place for them in ways we seemed to have forgotten. Middle school students . . .

### ***Intellectual Development:***

- Prefer new tasks or active learning, then experiences of reflection or revision of previous work. May show emerging ability in a particular skill or content area.
- Intensely curious. Willing to learn what they consider useful, enjoy using skills to solve real life problems.
- Increased ability to abstract in intellectual pursuits. Ask large, unanswerable questions about the meaning of life; do not expect absolute answers about are turned off by trivial adult responses. Reflective, analytical and introspective about they’re thoughts and feelings.
- Love to argue, but can and will see both sides.
- Increased ability to see the world from different perspectives.
- Easily “bored”.
- Learn well in cooperative groups.
- Are at risk in the development of moral and ethical choices and behaviors. Exploration of topics confronted in the media and in daily interactions experienced in family and peer groups, most are unprepared to cope.

### ***Physical Development:***

- High energy, need lots of rest
- Boys and girls mature at varying rates of speed. Girls tend to be taller the first two years of early adolescence and are more developed. Voices change for many boys and are developmentally about a year behind the girls.
- Menstruation for majority of girls.
- Skin problems emerging, hygiene a key issue.
- Food is important, especially mid-morning in school.
- Physical education and sports valued.

***“ . . . at CSA, you are loved by the teachers.”***

*– Dani Moody, former CSA student*

### ***Social Development:***

- Adult personality begins to emerge. May be rebellious toward parents but strongly depend on parent values. Want to make their own choices.
- Self-aware, insightful. Appears secure.
- Sarcasm emerges. Humor heightened. Double meaning word play, peer “vocabulary” (slang) important. One word answers to adult questions (minimal feedback).
- Music becomes a major preoccupation.
- Enjoy conversation with adult and peers.
- Can act out aggressive or drastic behavior at times. Boisterous. Rudeness. Test limits and challenge authority figures. Horseplay, practical jokes still high in boys.
- Need frequent affirmation from parents and teachers.
- May become anxious and disoriented when peer group ties are broken because of family relocation to other communities. Are often frightened by new school settings, which are large and impersonal.
- Are loyal to peer group values; can become cruel or insensitive to those outside peer group.
- Are socially at risk, adult values are largely shaped conceptually during adolescence; negative interactions with peers, parents, and teachers may compromise ideals and commitments.

*– These are just a few insights into the young adult our Middle Schooler’s are fast becoming. –*

## Small Schools versus Big Schools

The Charyl Stockwell Academy middle school is a small school environment, especially as compared to the many traditional public middle schools in the surrounding school districts. At CSA, we believe adolescence is a crucial time in a child's development and our small school provides an enriching environment for adolescents to learn good decision making skills on their path toward becoming responsible and intellectually capable adults.

### Research has found that small schools...

- ... provide a sense of connectedness, sense of being known and valued that motivates students to work hard and leads to high academic achievement.
- ... treat students more individually with a stronger bond between student and teacher. At CSA students can receive one on one attention whenever necessary.
- ... facilitate individual treatment of students, thereby allows them to excel in one subject matter while still developing their skills in another subject matter.
- ... have a higher parent involvement than big schools. At CSA, parents are free to enter classrooms at any time.
- ... elevate teacher satisfaction by enabling teachers to learn from their expert colleagues and enabling them to know their students and families well.
- ... raise student achievement...big city schools in New York, Pittsburgh and Chicago have gone to small neighborhood schools with success in raising student achievement.
- ... are safer and have fewer discipline problems, less tardiness and less absenteeism than bigger schools.
- ... maintain a better social fabric with students less likely to use alcohol, tobacco and drugs than students in bigger schools.

### Some drawbacks of small schools as noted in the research include:

- *Mixed age and ability groups are a disadvantage.* At CSA, we believe this is an advantage, due to the extensive research that supports multi-age classrooms.
- *Not enough subject specialist teachers.* At CSA, we believe in a strong academic program versus a wide range of offerings. We offer depth versus breadth with the emphasis on the intellectual development of students ("how to think"..

**Some drawbacks of small schools as noted in the research include: (continued)**

- *Small schools have limited space.* With the addition of our middle school building, space is adequate for our needs, with room to grow.
- *Limited resources affect quality.* We believe our small school environment enhances student connectedness and improves quality. We will be offering foreign language K-8 next year, and will add other curricular extensions as enrollment continues to increase.
- *Able children lack intellectual challenge.* CSA is offering a program for gifted students next year, which we believe will increase the intellectual challenge for all our students.
- *Larger schools can offer more extracurricular activities than smaller schools.* While CSA can not offer many extracurricular activities, the communities surrounding CSA offer a wealth of activities such as sports, dance and theatre to local residents.

***“ . . . I feel that it was quite an easy transition. On the very first day I found my way around easily, though the size of the building was quite a shock when compared to how big CSA is.” – CSA graduate, Class of 2003***

## ***Exemplary Middle Schools – What makes a great school?***

Every day, twenty million diverse, rapidly changing 10 to 15 year olds enrolled in our nation’s middle schools are making critical and complex life choices. So are their parents.

Discerning parents recognize their middle school aged children are forming the attitudes, values and habits of mind that will largely direct their behavior as adults. These parents also realize that the heart of any middle level education program must be based upon the developmental readiness, needs and interests of young adolescents.

In an effort to assist parents, administrators, teachers and students, the National Middle School Association has comprised a list of characteristics that are present in successful middle schools. The list has been developed based on extensive research of successful middle schools across the United States. According to research and cumulative evidence collected over the past thirty years, the characteristics when present over time lead to higher levels of student achievement and overall development.

The list, with Charyl Stockwell Academy’s response to each characteristic, is as follows.

***National Middle School Association believes successful schools for young adolescents are characterized by a culture that includes:***

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### ***A shared vision that guides decisions***

**National Middle School Association**

All decisions made about the school should be guided by a shared vision and the mission statement derived from it.

**Charyl Stockwell Academy**

Our shared vision, *CSA’s Mission Statement*, hangs prominently in the front entrance lobby of our school. This statement has been enhanced to form a middle school mission with clarification specific to adolescent students.

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### ***Educators who value working with this age group and are prepared to do so***

**National Middle School Association**

Educators understand the developmental uniqueness of the age group, the curriculum they teach and effective learning and assessment strategies. They need specific preparation and continuous professional development.

**Charyl Stockwell Academy**

Our middle school teachers are certified in their individual content areas, undergo continuous weekly staff development and attend weekly middle school staff meetings.

***Courageous, collaborative leadership***

***National Middle School Association***

Middle level leaders understand adolescents and the theory and practice of middle level education. The principal advocates, nurtures and sustains an effective instructional program.

***Charyl Stockwell Academy***

Shelley Stockwell, the building principal, has ten years administrative experience as well as certification as an elementary and secondary school administrator. The middle school teachers and the principal rely on parent input, thus creating a triad of leadership for our middle school students.

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***An inviting, supportive, safe environment***

***National Middle School Association***

A successful school is a joyful community that promotes learning and enhances students' physical and emotional well-being. Human relationships are paramount.

***Charyl Stockwell Academy***

Teachers and administrators actively pursue positive relations at every level. They are the basis of our school culture. The use of non-coercive teaching techniques and interventions with students is one of the pillars of our establishment.

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***High expectations for every member of the learning community***

***National Middle School Association***

Teachers, students and parents hold themselves and each other to high expectations. This promotes positive attitudes and behaviors and motivates students to tackle challenges. Successful schools recognize that young adolescents are capable of far more than adults often assume.

***Charyl Stockwell Academy***

CSA continues to refine standards that define quality work. Students are supported in their individual efforts to achieve standards identified in each content area.

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***Students and teachers engaged in active learning***

***National Middle School Association***

The most successful learning strategies are ones that involve each student personally. Young adolescents learn best through engagement and interaction. These strategies involve students in dialogue with teachers and with one another.

***Charyl Stockwell Academy***

At CSA students choose how to learn (not what to learn). Teachers demonstrate the learning process and continuously use many resources. Students routinely share knowledge with other students, teachers and parents.

***“ I was very prepared to do all of the classes at the high school – in fact in some of the work we are doing I already had at CSA.” – CSA graduate, Class of 2003***

***An Adult Advocate for every student***

***National Middle School Association***

Academic success and personal growth increase markedly when young adolescents' emotional needs are met. All adults in successful middle schools are advocates, advisors and mentors.

***Charyl Stockwell Academy***

At CSA, our smaller community, with its sense of family, is a place where students and teachers know each other well and feel safe, supported and connected. The small teacher-to-student ratio allows students to form close relationships with more than one adult advocate.

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***School initiates strong partnership between home and school***

***National Middle School Association***

Successful middle schools promote family involvement and take the initiative to develop home-school bonds. The involvement of family is linked to higher levels of student achievement and improved student behavior.

***Charyl Stockwell Academy***

Another pillar of our CSA community has always been that parents are welcome in the classroom. There is no closed-door policy. Teachers assign activities that inspire and promote discussions with family members. Open communication with parents is valued.

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***Curriculum that is relevant, challenging, integrative, and exploratory***

***National Middle School Association***

An effective curriculum provides direction for what young adolescents should know and be able to do. It also helps them achieve the attitudes and behaviors needed for a full, productive and satisfying life.

***Charyl Stockwell Academy***

Teachers include high quality learning activities that create opportunities for students to pose and answer questions that are important to them. Through challenging focused assignments, students are able to discover their own abilities, talents, interests, values, and preferences. They are encouraged to seek connections within and across subjects.

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***Multiple learning and teaching approaches that respond to diversity***

***National Middle School Association***

Teaching approaches should enhance and accommodate the diverse skills, abilities and prior knowledge of young adolescents and draw upon students individual learning styles.

***Charyl Stockwell Academy***

CSA teaching teams use a variety of teaching methods to accommodate many learning styles and levels. Methods such as layered curriculum, active and engaged teaching in large, small and individual groups, hands-on activities and extensive differentiation of curriculum.

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***Assessment and evaluation programs that promote quality learning***

***National Middle School Association***

Continuous, authentic and appropriate assessment and evaluation measures provide evidence about every student’s learning progress. Grades alone are inadequate expressions for assessing the many goals of middle level education.

***Charyl Stockwell Academy***

We believe the ultimate purpose of assessment is that students become their own best assessors. Therefore, the CSA middle school program uses many balanced, broad based assessment tools, including biannual Performance Series Assessment in Reading and Math, Performance based portfolio assessment, Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA) and anecdotal and written observations. Assessments are used to check for understanding and to guide instruction. .

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***School-wide efforts and policies that foster health, wellness and safety***

***National Middle School Association***

Physical and psychological safety strives to build resiliency in young people by maintaining an environment in which peaceful and safe interaction are expected and supported by written policies, scheduled professional development and student-focused activities.

***Charyl Stockwell Association***

CSA has clear written board policies to ensure a physically and psychologically safe environment. Additionally, the academy has been funded through a grant by the U.S. Department of Education Safe and Drug Free Schools office to create and implement a character education program called Smart Character Choices that teaches students to be internally motivated. Students participate in activities weekly that foster the character traits of getting along, kindness, optimism, respect, responsibility, and work ethic. The middle school staff participate in professional development activities monthly to support this program and to build on their skills.

***“Charyl Stockwell Academy has been a great place to learn. It has been a safe place where I can get involved with things. We work together (the students, parents, and teachers) and make CSA great.” –Discovery student***

## *CSA Middle School Structure*







## *CSA Middle School Course of Study*

### *Language Arts Curriculum*

#### *First Year (Sixth Grade)*

**Writing Process:** Organizing, drafting, editing, revising, and publishing the following: Narrative, Expository Essays, Advertisements, Summaries, Descriptive Essays, and Tall Tales.

**Prewriting Strategies:** Brainstorming, four square, web, and outline.

**Paragraph Formation:** Topic Sentences, Supporting Sentences, and Transition Sentences.

**5 Paragraph Essay Components:** Introduction, body, and conclusion

**Poetry:** Haiku, Limerick, Acrostic

**Public Speaking:** Demonstration Speech (3 minute)

**Reading Comprehension:** Making Text Connections, Inferences, Visualization, and Retelling

**Understand and use:** Noun, verb, adjective, adverb, and homophones

#### *Second Year (Seventh Grade)*

**Writing Process:** Organizing, drafting, editing, revising, and publishing the following: Dialogues, Myths and Legends, Persuasive Essays, Letters, and Informative Reports

**Prewriting Strategies:** Note taking, Outlining, Researching

**Poetry:** Narrative, Free Verse

**Public Speaking:** Informative Speech (5 minute)

**Reading Comprehension:** Making Text Connections, Inferences, Visualization, Retelling, and Readers Journal.

**Understand and Use:** Dialogue, similes, and metaphors

#### *Third Year (Eighth Grade)*

**Writing Process:** Organizing, drafting, editing, revising, and publishing the following: Documented Essay, Editorials, Newspaper Articles, and Short Stories

**Prewriting Strategies:** Note taking, and organizing research materials, documentation, evaluating resources

**Poetry:** Sonnet, Quatrain

**Public Speaking:** Persuasive Speech (7 to 10 minutes)

**Reading Comprehension:** Making Text Connections, Inferences, Visualization, Retelling, and Readers Journal, Literature discussion group participation

**Understand and Use:** Analogies, personification, and synesthesia

***“ What is really strange at the high school is that it seems like lots of students do not like to read – in fact it seems like they hate to read.” – CSA graduate, Class of 2003***

***Science Curriculum***

***First Year (Sixth Grade)***

**Constructing New Scientific Knowledge**

**Reflecting on Scientific Knowledge**

**Earth Science:** Geosphere

**Physical Science:** Matter and Energy Changes in Matter

**Life Science:** Cells, Organization of Living Things

***Second Year (Seventh Grade)***

**Constructing New Scientific Knowledge**

**Reflecting on Scientific Knowledge**

**Earth Science:** Hydrosphere

**Physical Science:** Motion of Objects

**Life Science:** Heredity, Evolution

***Third Year (Eighth Grade)***

**Constructing New Scientific Knowledge**

**Reflecting on Scientific Knowledge**

**Earth Science:** Atmosphere and Weather, Solar System, Galaxy and Universe

**Physical Science:** Waves and Vibrations

**Life Science:** Ecosystems

Differentiated instruction will be used in a multi-aged sixth, seventh, eighth grade class.

***“ Our teachers care so much about what’s bugging us, why we are sad or mad. They like to know what they can do for us.”***

***– CSA graduate, Class of 2000***

## ***Social Studies Curriculum***

### ***History***

- History of Michigan and the United States: The Meeting of Three Worlds (beginnings to 1620), Colonization and Settlement (1585-1763), Revolution and the New Nation (1754-1815), Expansion and Reform (1801-1861) and Civil War and Reconstruction (1850-1877).
- Study contemporary conditions in Africa, Asia, Canada, Europe and Latin America and trace some historical origins of each.
- Identify and explain how individuals in history showed good character.
- Use biographies to show how events affect individuals.
- Compare different perspectives of historical events.
- Evaluate key decisions at critical turning points in history.

### ***Geography***

- Describe, compare, and explain the locations and characteristics of places, cultures, and settlements.
- Describe, compare, and explain the locations and characteristics of ecosystems, resources, human adaptation, environmental impact, and the interrelationships among them.
- Describe, compare, and explain the locations and characteristics of economic activities, trade, political activities, migration, information flow, and the interrelationships among them.
- Draw a sketch map of the world from memory.
- Compare major world regions' cultures, economy, governmental systems, environment, and communications.

### ***Civics***

- Describe how the federal government serves the purposes set forth in the Constitution.
- Study various types of government.
- Identify the purpose of national, state, and local government.
- Explain the meaning of core democratic values found in the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution.
- Distinguish between civil and criminal procedure.
- Evaluate candidates for public office.
- Explain how the constitution is maintained as the supreme law of the land.
- Understand how the world is organized politically and the roles the United States plays internationally.

## ***Social Studies Curriculum (continued)***

### ***Economics***

- Describe how economic forces affect personal finance choices.
- Describe how business practices, profit, and a willingness to take risks, enabled an entrepreneur to operate.
- Compare various methods for the production and distribution of goods and services.
- Describe the effects of a current public policy on businesses.
- Describe how government decisions on taxation, spending, public goods, and regulation impact what is produced, how it is produced, and who receives the benefits of production.
- Explain how a free market system works and compare to other systems.
- Describe how trade generates economic development and interdependence and analyze the resulting challenges and benefits for individuals, producers, and government.

***“ CSA is more than just a school, it is a family. With friendly staff and teachers, my children quickly found a caring, loving and safe environment in order to reach their fullest potential” – CSA Parent***

### ***Inquiry***

- Use a variety of sources to acquire information.
- Use traditional and electronic means to organize social science information and to make maps, graphs, and tables.
- Conduct investigations on a social science issue about a culture, world region, or international problem and use a variety of resources to gather information and use information to answer the question; then report the results.

### ***Public Discourse and Decision Making***

- Trace the origins of a public policy issue, analyze different perspectives of the issue, and evaluate possible ways to resolve the issue.
- Engage in conversations which attempt to clarify and resolve national and international policy issues.
- Write essays expressing decisions on national and international policies.

**Math Curriculum****First Year (Sixth Grade)****Number Sense**

- Compare decimals to fractions
- Estimation
- Decimals
- Order of Operations

**Algebra**

- Number sets: Real, Rational, Integers
- Equations I
- Properties: Associative, Commutative, and Distributive

**Fractions**

- Factors
- Multiples
- Mixed Numbers
- Improper Fractions
- LCM/ GCF
- Add/subtract/multiply/Divide

**Statistics, Graphing, Probability**

- Organization of data/ defining problem/ choosing sample/interpreting Data
- Bias
- Collection and organization of data
- Graphs I

**Geometry and Spatial Reasoning**

- Points/ lines/ Planes
- Angles
- Solids
- Coordinate Plane I
- Transformations I

**Patterns**

- Describe, analyze, and generalize patterns arising in a variety of contexts and expressing them in general terms

**Measurement**

- Customary Measurements
- Measurement units
- Using formulas I

**Second Year (Seventh Grade)****Number Sense**

- Compare decimals, fractions, and percents
- Exponents I
- Square Roots I
- Rational Numbers: Introductions
- Integers (add/subtract/multiply/divide)

**Algebra**

- Like Terms
- Equations II
- Integers II

**Statistics, Graphing, Probability**

- Probability
- Central Tendencies
- Graph II

**Geometry and Spatial Reasoning**

- Symmetry
- Coordinate Plane II
- Classifying and Comparing Triangles
- Transformations II

**Patterns**

- Represent and record patterns in a variety of different ways.
- Differentiate between functions and relationships: linear vs. non-linear

**Measurement**

- Measurement Estimations
- Error
- Using Formulas II

**Math Curriculum (continued)**

**Third Year (Eighth Grade)**

**Number Sense**

- Rates, Ratios, and Proportions
- Rational Numbers: Number operations
- Scientific Notation
- Exponents II
- Square Roots II

**Algebra**

- Equations
- Slope and intercepts
- graph representations

**Statistics, Graphing, Probability**

- Variability
- Prediction
- Graph II

**Geometry and Spatial Reasoning**

- Constructing Triangles
- Transformation III

**Patterns**

- Use patterns and their generalizations to make justified inferences and predictions
- Use patterns and their generalizations to solve problems.

**Measurement**

- Maximum/ Minimum (perimeter/area/volume)
- Measuring with shadows
- Formulas III
- Trig

***“ I love math and CSA has challenged me in this subject. I am able to be as hard working as I want in the subject that I like best. I am able to go at a faster pace that keeps me interested in Math.” – Discovery Student***

## ***Middle School Teachers: Belief Statements that support our mission***

Written January through February, 2003

*Middle School is a crucial time in terms of students choosing to become avid learners, or choosing to disconnect from the learning process.*

*We believe positive teacher / student relationships are mandatory in terms of reaching adolescent students in a way that will inspire them to learn and grow.*

Methods:

- **Advisory group; morning meetings**
- **Individual conferencing and goal setting**
- **Character education**
- **All teachers “know” all students**
- **Electives**
- **Choice theory**
- **Size of the middle school community**
- **Accentuate the positive**

*We believe clarity and consistency of expectations provide a safe environment for the adolescent student. (procedures, routines, rules & boundaries —written)*

Methods:

- **Character education**
- **Academic and social tasks at individual levels**
- **Process of creating rules that allows student ownership**
- **Mission focuses on a safe environment**
- **Encourage positive risk-taking**

*We believe adolescent students hold fairness and perceived equity as foremost in relationships with adults.*

Methods:

- **Teacher modeling in their interactions with each other and with students**
- **Integration of discussions related to the “common good”**
- **Opportunities for reflection and self-evaluation**
- **Honoring students right to due process at all times**
- **Opportunities for shared decision-making and problem solving**

*We believe learning activities that are relevant will increase student engagement.*

Methods:

- **Project-based learning**
- **Differentiation**
- **Thematic learning**
- **Integrative support curriculum**
- **Text to self and world connections**
- **Provide choice in learning experience**
- **Cross curriculum units**
- **Class trips that integrate activities that**

*We believe social / peer relationships are primary; opportunities for interaction that should be infused into the school curriculum / day.*

Methods:

- **Cooperative learning**
- **Field trips**
- **Extra curricular activities**
- **Student center**
- **Morning meeting / advisory meetings**
- **Lunch & recess**
- **Student Council**

*We believe cooperative learning, teamwork, and student collaboration should be strongly encouraged, but facilitated and monitored carefully.*

Methods:

- **Thematic units**
- **Discussion groups**
- **Group projects**
- **Literature circles**
- **Group MEBA**

*We believe physical movement must be integrated into the structure of the classroom and program.*

Methods:

- **Morning meeting and advisory activity**
- **Purposeful movement in classroom**
- **Hands-on, multi-modality activities and projects**
- **Movement between activities**
- **Options to work on floor, stand, etc.**
- **Winter or Spring camp experience**

*We believe the school program must include opportunities for choice.*

Methods:

- **Layered curriculum**
- **Student made rubrics**
- **Choice of reading selections**
- **Students are given a variety of options to demonstrate learning**
- **Choice built into lessons**
- **Student-led morning meetings**
- **Student-led activities**

*We believe self-evaluation must be the primary assessment vehicle at the middle school level.*

Methods:

- **Student and teacher rubrics**
- **Work to teach self-evaluation**
- **Goal setting**
- **Students taking part in their progress reports**
- **Editing and revision of work**
- **Student-led conferencing**
- **Use of daily planner**

*We believe an integrated and cross-disciplinary curriculum model that incorporates relevant learning activities produces a higher level of student engagement.*

Methods:

- **Thematic instruction**
- **Jason project**
- **Layered curriculum**
- **Culminating events**
- **“World in Motion” science**
- **Class trips: camp, Chicago, Close-Up, etc.**

*We believe a variety of formal and informal, and authentic assessment tools must be utilized to evaluate student progress.*

Methods:

- **Presentations**
- **Layered curriculum**
- **Variety of options to demonstrate learning**
- **Writing Process (6+1 Writing Traits)**
- **MEAP**
- **Culminating events**
- **Oral defense**
- **DRA**
- **Educational vision**
- **Performance Series**

*We believe high expectations for success in learning is critical in reaching the learning potential of each individual student.*

Methods:

- **Knowledge of individual student performance through varied and ongoing assessment tools**
- **Writing Process (6+1 Writing Traits)**
- **Encourage revision**
- **Strive for continuous improvement with a goal of quality work**
- **Layered curriculum**
- **Checking for accuracy**

*We believe the curriculum delivery model must honor the diversity of students as related to:*

- **Learning style**
- **Academic levels**
- **Individual interests**
- **5 Basic Needs**

Methods:

- **Relationships with students**
- **Choice theory**
- **Varied presentation of curriculum**
- **Layered curriculum**
- **Morning meeting and advisory assessments**

*We believe in meaningful participation in families, school and communities*

Methods:

- **Environmental awareness**
- **Student-led conferencing**
- **Student assignments that inspire and promote discussions with family member**
- **Frequent and open communication with parents**
- **Service learning**
- **Student council**
- **Parents encouraged and welcomed in the school setting**

*We believe in instilling a sense of ownership and positive identification to their school.*

Methods:

- **Service learning**
- **School picnic**
- **Culminating events**
- **Spirit day**
- **Unit level trips – Chicago, Close up, Camp**

***“ It is easier to go to this school because you get more attention.” – Discovery Student***

## ***CSA Middle School Goals – 2004/05 School Year***

- Continue to refine and add depth to all *content area curriculum*, with a focus on *differentiation* at all levels.
- Continue to move forward on the *character education program* with further emphasis on procedures & social protocols based on high expectations for all students, as well as the in-depth study of character integrated into the social studies curriculum strand.
- Clarify and expand the process for students achieving *quality work standards* in all areas of study.
- Expand student exposure to a variety of testing protocols that prepare them for taking academic tests at the high school level, and for entry into colleges and universities.
- Continue to develop and expand *elective courses* to reflect an emphasis on the intellectual development of students.
- Articulate the sequence of curriculum extension through *community-based experiences* (i.e., field trips, community service, etc).
- Examine and enhance opportunities for *student leadership* at the middle school level.
- Articulate the definition of “*homework*” at the middle school that incorporates purposeful and relevant learning tasks, and appropriate rigor to develop effective study habits.
- Further develop and refine specific student & teacher *written communications* that will enhance the partnership between the school and home.
- Identify ways to provide concrete representation of the *rite of passage* into the middle school, as well as incremental recognitions (not rewards) during the middle school years.

