



FSMA Middle School Overview

FSMA intends to create a Middle School program that prepares students for life while truly understanding the unique needs of this age group. The goal will be to provide students with the learning activities and skills needed during adolescence through a combination of the Montessori philosophy, current developmental research, and Common Core State Standards.

Over the next year, FSMA will discover, adapt and incorporate an approach to learning that is based on what is emerging in the current world. This knowledge will inform our decisions about the academic rigor, learning opportunities, and schedule. At a core, FSMA will create a program that will engage children in pressing global challenges, think creatively, design and implement solutions, participate in democracy, and act as entrepreneurs. Through rigorous study and experiential learning, our students will develop a comprehensive knowledge of the world, explore complex issues and problems, embrace civic responsibilities, and engage with people different from themselves.

Curriculum:

First State Montessori Academy intends to create a Middle School Curriculum that focuses on four major subjects and a variety of exciting and unique experiences in many other areas. FSMA will help students discover the connections among the core subject areas - math, science, social studies, and language arts.

Math: At a foundational level, “what” will be taught will solely be based on the CCSS and “how” children learn will be based on the Montessori philosophy. Each student will have an individualized math plan and participate in small group lessons.

During the two- year cycle, each child will complete coursework in algebra, geometry, measurement, statistics, and computation. In addition, coursework will involve theoretical reasoning as well as investigations, relevant problems and discovering patterns. FSMA believes that making connections builds mathematical thinking and new understanding. The curriculum will help students make frequent connections between math and science and real-life problem solving.

Social Studies: FSMA will utilize the Delaware Standards for Social Studies. This will include coursework in four specific areas - civics, economics, geography and history. Teachers will utilize the model units and develop individualized learning experiences that align with the goals of each standard. In addition, teachers will integrate the Common Core State Standards for literacy with history and social studies learning. FSMA's social studies curriculum will utilize the Montessori cultural curriculum as a skeleton for the scope and sequence over the 7th and 8th grade year and will work to align it to the standards to ensure there are no gaps or uncovered areas.

Language Arts: FSMA believes that reading is essential. The children will participate in book club type activities to provide a diversity of genres, culture and reading experiences. Reading will be integrated throughout all areas. Research will be used as a function for reading for information, remembering, organizing, and presenting around not only concepts, but also topics pertaining to real life. Reading selections will be multicultural and include classic adolescent literature and contemporary works that emphasize diversity and a variety of global challenges.

Study skills and vocabulary will also be a core component of the language arts curriculum. Students will also complete individual and small group lessons in spelling, vocabulary, grammar, punctuation, and sentence/paragraph structure.

Communication through oral and written form will be expected in all classroom settings. The adolescent community calls for the use of reading, writing, listening, performing, and speaking as part of addressing the needs of the community as well as for self-expression, academic research, and community service. FSMA students will be taught and expected to comprehend the process of writing including prewriting, organizing, revising and editing. There will be an expectation that students increase their writing abilities and increase their communication skills in a variety of genres. Writing will be integrated into all other classes. In addition to culminating projects, personal research and creative interpretations, children will complete weekly work such as vocabulary, grammar and editing practice.

All language arts curricula will be based on the CCSS, used in conjunction with Montessori lessons and principles.

Science: At the middle school level, science will be conducted by teachers introducing topics, followed by students working in groups to complete laboratory experiments, projects and science content reading assignments. Science coursework will be based on student inquiry. Students will learn to design and conduct experiments, observe and collect data, analyze data using scientific inductive and deductive reasoning, and present findings.

As structured in the Next Generation Science Standards, FSMA's science curricula will have three core areas – Life Sciences, Physical Sciences, and Earth Sciences. The disciplinary core ideas as well as science and engineering practices will be the core instructional objectives that units and courses will be based upon.

Life Sciences – Students will begin to study biology while examining the roles and relationships between organisms in an ecosystem. Health education standards will be integrated into the life sciences curriculum.

Physical Sciences – Students at FSMA will build their understanding of the physical sciences through hands-on exploration of the physical world. The framework for this area will include sophisticated and concrete experiences, use of tools and instruments, and a focus on utilizing technology in ways that support greater conceptual understanding.

Earth Sciences – Content in this area will include learning about the Earth, its history, our universe, materials, water, weather and climate, and other disciplinary core ideas identified in the Next Generation Standards.

Other Opportunities that will be present in FSMA's Middle School Program:

Self-Expression Courses: FSMA will expose our students to various specialists and avenues for self-expression through the arts, physical education and technology. Offerings may include graphic design, instruments, drama production, fitness, and more.

Career and Technical Education: FSMA will be seeking natural ways to integrate skills that will prepare students for future specific career and technical programs. Students will participate in activities to teach leadership, conflict resolution, character development, and will engage in a personal social responsibility curriculum. FSMA will be looking for possible community partnerships that allow for specific programs to be built upon.

Physical Education – As required by the state regulation, all children through 8th grade will participate in physical education courses. Also, 7th grade students will participate in the Fitness Gram Assessment (or whatever the state determined assessment is determined to be).

World Language and International Education – While FSMA believes that there are many ways to naturally include these topics into other curricula areas, we will be developing a plan to specifically teach these topics.

Health Education – Specifically, as per the regulation, in grades 7 and 8, separate from other subject areas, a minimum of sixty (60) hours of comprehensive health education and family life education of which fifteen (15) hours, in each grade, will address drug and alcohol education. This will be done over a two year period.