



**2021-22**

**Middle School Curriculum Guide**

Updated August 30, 2021

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## Mission

The IDEAL School of Manhattan is an inclusion school dedicated to creating a diverse community that affirms and accepts the full identities of all people, while inspiring academic excellence, creative leadership, and a desire to build a more just and equitable world.

## Honor Code

This Honor Code summarizes but does not replace the community standards and rules for students set forth in The IDEAL School Family Handbook and the IDEAL Upper School Student Handbook and Code of Conduct. It is comprised of five essential rules and responsibilities to guide each community member to serve the school's mission and to participate in the creation of an inclusive and respectful community, in and out of the classroom, where all members have the opportunity to strive for excellence, demonstrate creative leadership, and work together to build a more just and equitable world.

## The Five I's of IDEAL

1. I will be respectful of the learning process, strive for excellence in and out of the classroom, and engage respectfully in all school classes, programs, and activities.
2. I will act with integrity and represent myself and my work honestly.
3. I will ensure that my words and actions demonstrate respect for all and acceptance of the full identity of all individuals that make up our diverse community.
4. I will strive to ensure that my actions, my work, and my words help to create a more inclusive community and a more just and equitable world.
5. I will be a creative and compassionate leader by modeling IDEAL's core values both in and out of school.

## The Arts

*Through the robust arts curriculum of The IDEAL School of Manhattan, students develop creativity, critical thinking skills, and confidence, and they learn to take healthy risks as they explore multiple perspectives and strengthen their own thinking. The communication, planning, and perspective-taking skills students acquire in the arts strengthen their learning in all academic areas. Partnerships with New York City outreach programs and cultural institutions extend classroom experiences and create a vibrant curriculum that is integrated throughout all disciplines. All Middle School students choose one elective per semester.*

**Note:** Electives are subject to change based on faculty and student interest and schedule.

## Music

### ***Interdisciplinary Music Appreciation (Grades 6-8)***

Drawing from their knowledge in other subjects, personal life experiences, heritage, and viewpoints, students explore how music is both a product as well as an influencer of culture. Students learn how to appreciate music as a musician--applying musical language to evaluate aesthetic and performative aspects of music--and also as an ethnomusicologist--drawing connections between cultural implications and influences in the music they enjoy.

### ***Instrumental Exploration (Grades 6-8)***

Applying their growing expertise as music appreciators, students engage in instrumental mechanics, ear training, and performance with a variety of melodic and rhythmic instruments including guitar, bass, drums, and piano. Students employ rudiments of written music and also become practitioners of oral musical traditions from around the world.

### ***Choral Ensemble (Grades 6-8)***

The Choral Ensemble is a performing group that has regular practice in musical literacy, effective vocal techniques, singing in multiple-part harmony, and solo singing, leading to the creation of a blended group sound. The ensemble performs diverse choral works seasonally and for special events.

## Theatre

### ***Theatre for Social Change (Grades 6-8)***

*“Theatre is a form of knowledge; it should and can also be a means of transforming society. Theatre can help us build our future, rather than just waiting for it.”--Augusto Boal*  
Theatre can create social and personal change. It can be innovative and contribute to learning. In this course, students uncover the radical roots of the theatre in education, and they utilize the tools and techniques of Augusto Boal’s interactive and participatory “Theatre of the Oppressed” and Bertolt Brecht’s “Epic Theatre” to research, create, and practice a piece of theatre for presentation.

### **Actors' Lab (Grades 6-8)**

Actors' Lab gives students the opportunity to accomplish their best on-camera presentations. In this course, students participate in performance-based and production activities dedicated to creating compelling works for the screen. The classroom is equipped with cameras, microphones, softbox lighting, set pieces, and props for student use. Students film scenes, practice multi-camera shooting activities, and work as a group to compose original short films. This course challenges students to explore their creative identity, hone their energy, and express their presence to the camera. Furthermore, students gain knowledge and practice in multiple film crew responsibilities to support the actors presenting their scenes.

### **Comedy Workshop (Grades 6-8)**

This course gives students the opportunity to celebrate humor in all its forms. In this course, students are exposed to variations of improvisation, parody, delivery, and physicality. Additionally, students explore literary works by some of the great comedic playwrights of the 20th century, such as Neil Simon, Mary Chase, Edward Albee, and Eugene O'Neill. Students also collaborate to develop original scenes and characters.

## **Visual Art**

### **Studio Art (Grades 6 - 8)**

Students learn the introductory skills and techniques behind a variety of artistic media and practices. Throughout this student-centered course, artists engage with the eight “studio habits of mind,” which help them think and behave like an artist. Students are introduced to drawing, painting, collage, 3D sculpture, digital, and textile art throughout the semester and will be responsible for the care and upkeep of our shared art room studio. Throughout the semester, students keep a sketchbook and participate in class critiques and discussions about historic and modern artists. After exploring and practicing introductory skills in each medium, students create their own “Wonderful Original Work” of art. The culminating “W.O.W” piece is a completely student-led and designed opportunity to share their individual talents with our school community, presented in the annual ArtBeat community showcase.

## **English**

*The English Department cultivates voice, develops critical reading skills, and encourages students to work towards comfort and proficiency in writing in a variety of genres. The department emphasizes process as well as product, making drafting and revision a routine part of our students' experience at IDEAL. Grammar, vocabulary, and spelling are grounded in and reinforced by the study of literature and writing assignments. By seventh grade, students compose and workshop rough drafts of essays or personal or creative writing assignments regularly, and they strengthen their editing skills through a guided peer-review process. Whenever possible, classes attend plays or other cultural events in conjunction with their study of literature and explore connections between literature and life throughout their studies.*

### **Middle School English A, B, and C**

As students develop their decoding, fluency, comprehension skills, and written expression, our foundations-level English classes are designed to meet the students where they are and support their development with different levels to support our learners. Students are able to progress through the levels as they master skills and strategies. Teachers incorporate Preventing Academic Failure (PAF) to provide added support to students on their encoding, decoding, and fluency skills. Developing a love for reading and literature is the goal for all our students. An emphasis on both literal and inferential comprehension is a daily part of class, as students discuss news articles, interpret novels in the classroom setting, and pursue independent reading choices. Students read novels such as *Inside Out and Back Again*, *The One and Only Ivan*, *Wonder*, *Trickster*, *The Lightning Thief*, and *The Giver*. Through discussion, students learn about plot, conflict and resolution, character motivation, and figurative language. The class takes a step-by-step approach to writing, which ranges from journal entries, to paragraphs, to five-paragraph essays, to promote voice and fluency. Vocabulary is studied contextually from the novels students read. Words are previewed, reviewed in context, defined, and then students will use the Frayer Model to expand their knowledge of specific vocabulary. Vocabulary is supported by the *Words Their Way* program. Grammar skills, and the editing and revising process round out the student's learning to ensure they develop a deeper love and understanding of reading and writing.

### **English 6**

As students transition to Middle School, their study of spelling, vocabulary, paragraph structure, and grammar is integrated into their thematic study of literature and ongoing opportunities to cultivate their voice and style as writers. Students solidify their knowledge of parts of speech and figurative language and review how to construct and punctuate grammatically correct sentences. In conjunction with their study of literature, students learn to craft personal, creative, persuasive, and comparative papers. Students are introduced to the formal writing process, including brainstorming, planning, drafting, editing, and sharing. The themes of supernatural, good vs. evil, jealousy, vengeance, mortality, and immortality connect the literature in sixth grade. Texts include works such as *The Giver*, *Tuck Everlasting*, *The Lightning Thief*, *One Half From the East*, *The Bridge to Terabithia*, *Hatchet*, and a selection of Greek myths. Through reading, students learn to identify literary elements such as plot, setting, conflict, theme, character development, and tone. Dystopian and traditional literature receive particular focus. Students are assessed on their reading, writing, vocabulary, and participation in class discussions. This class uses *Vocabulary from Classical Roots Grade 6* and *Write on Course 20/20 Grade 6* workbooks for weekly vocabulary and grammar development.

### **English 7**

In seventh grade English, reading, writing, and language skills continue to be major areas of concentration, and all aspects of this course focus on developing critical and inferential thinking skills. A variety of texts introduce students to the themes of coming of age, identity, and friendship, and students practice their analytical skills by evaluating various points of view. Texts include works such as *The Outsiders*, *Monsters on Maple Street*, *Holes*, *Crash*,

*Trickster, Much Ado About Nothing, Under a Painted Sky, and Walk Two Moons.* In their writing, students work on developing familiarity with the formal stages of the writing process, emphasizing editing and peer review. Students compose personal, creative, persuasive, and comparative papers. Grammar and usage instruction is embedded within writing units, with a particular focus on subject-verb agreement as well as pronoun-antecedent agreement. Students are assessed on their reading, writing, and participation in class discussions. This class uses *Vocabulary from Classical Roots Grade 7* and *Write on Course 20/20 Grade 7* workbooks for weekly vocabulary and grammar development.

### **English 8**

English 8 continues to develop students' reading, writing, and language skills. Eighth-grade students develop their analytical skills by reading a variety of novels and plays. Students learn to evaluate literary criticism and to incorporate secondary source material into their own analyses. As a part of the research process, students learn to utilize MLA guidelines, format, and citations. The literature emphasizes themes of injustice, integrity, prejudice, and self-assertion. Texts include works such as *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn, Romeo and Juliet, To Kill a Mockingbird, Piecing Me Together, Life of Pi, and Out of My Mind.* When writing, students manipulate their phrasing and sentence structure to convey precise ideas fluidly, applying transitional devices and cohesive organization. By the end of the year, students have developed their voice and craft as writers by composing personal narratives, poetry, argumentative essays, and a research paper. Students are assessed on their reading, writing, and participation in class discussions. This class uses *Vocabulary from Classical Roots Grade 8* and *Write on Course 20/20 Grade 8* workbooks for weekly vocabulary and grammar development.

## **History**

*The History Department at IDEAL emphasizes historical thinking, research, and writing skills as students study World and American history through a variety of contrasting lenses. Debate and discussion are featured heavily in classes that cultivate student voice and opinion through the examination of various viewpoints, even as students develop their foundational knowledge of the subject matter.*

### **History 6: Global History 1**

This world history course explores the development of ancient civilizations in Eurasia, starting with the Neolithic Revolution in Mesopotamia and spreading out along the east/west latitude to Egypt, Persia, India, and China. We begin by focusing on the dawn of humanity and exploring the factors that made cities and civilizations possible. Why certain hunter-gatherer communities developed into conquering empires while others remained hunter-gatherers who were conquered is a central question of our work. Subsequently, we see how the Neolithic Revolution led to the rise of more complex societies with developed economies, social hierarchies, and political institutions. Students examine the benefits and problems associated with maintaining such institutions. We also study the birth of some of the major religions in the world--Judaism, Hinduism, and Buddhism. Skills students learn this year

enable them to analyze the causes and effects of major events and to compare and contrast different belief systems, perspectives, social policies, and political systems. This course uses SAVVAS *myWorld Interactive History Early Ages* text.

### **History 7: American History**

While many American history courses begin with the arrival of Europeans, this class recognizes that U.S. history is best begun with an understanding of the cultures of the continent's original inhabitants. By studying the cultures of the Lenape of the northeast temperate forest, the Hopi of the southwest desert, the Inuit of the Alaskan Arctic, and the Sioux of the Great Plains, students explore the cultural heritage of these groups and how it relates to their location. We then look at the arrival of the Europeans to the continent by examining the impact of their settlement on indigenous cultures. Students also study how these small colonies became the United States of America by exploring the conflict between the United States and Great Britain. Finally, the students examine how our early government evolved and functioned and compare this with the workings of our government today. This course uses SAVVAS *myWorld Interactive American History Beginnings to 1877* text.

### **History 8: Global History 1**

This world history course explores the development of ancient civilizations in Eurasia, starting with the Neolithic Revolution in Mesopotamia and spreading out along the east/west latitude to Egypt, Persia, India, and China. We begin by focusing on the dawn of humanity and exploring the factors that made cities and civilizations possible. Why certain hunter-gatherer communities developed into conquering empires while others remained hunter-gatherers who were conquered is a central question of our work. Subsequently, we see how the Neolithic Revolution led to the rise of more complex societies with developed economies, social hierarchies, and political institutions. Students examine the benefits and problems associated with maintaining such institutions. We also study the birth of some of the major religions in the world--Judaism, Hinduism, and Buddhism. Skills students learn this year enable them to analyze the causes and effects of major events and to compare and contrast different belief systems, perspectives, social policies, and political systems. This course uses SAVVAS *myWorld Interactive History Early Ages* text.

### **Civil Rights Research Project (Grades 9-12)**

The annual, schoolwide Civil Rights Research Project is an opportunity for every student to examine an aspect of civil rights that resonates for them and springs from the history curriculum. This year-long research process begins in September with students exploring the focus that their research will take. In recent years, classes have studied issues such as the right to access to clean water, quality education, rights of women and girls, voting rights, and rights of indigenous peoples. Guided by teachers, research sources are identified and students articulate their understanding of the civil rights issue, the stakeholders, potential solutions, and ways young people can have agency in the solution. Students write a research paper and develop a forum to present and share their research with the community in the Civil Rights Research Project presentations.



## The Learning Center

*The Learning Center is the hub of academic life at IDEAL. It provides a comfortable space for one-to-one and small group work where experienced faculty and learning specialists expand upon typical classroom instruction by providing additional support, enrichment, and resources such as book clubs and study skills classes. Each student's individual schedule provides time throughout the school day, one to three times per week, to visit the Learning Center to address specific academic needs. Students are also encouraged to visit or schedule an appointment to explore resources or clarify current work.*

### **Grade Level Learning Specialist**

*Each Middle School grade has a designated Learning Specialist who teaches within that grade, serves the Zenith students in the grade through Learning Center classes, and acts as an additional resource to faculty members supporting differentiation, and developing student-centered or technology-based activities.*

## Mathematics

*The Mathematics Department strives to foster in all students an understanding of the foundational and algebraic mathematical functions that order our world. Math classes encourage critical thinking, creative and collaborative problem solving, and the connections between the curriculum and our world. Students are assessed regularly to be sure they are progressing at an appropriately challenging and supportive pace. Students begin the curriculum as appropriate for their readiness level and progress at their own pace, regardless of grade level.*

### **Middle School Math 1 (Grades 6-8)**

Middle School Math 1 is designed to enhance students' basic math skills. Students gain an understanding of the number system, place value, and operation of numbers that do not involve regrouping. Students learn how to measure and compare, important life skills that encompass the concepts of length, weight, temperature, time, and money. Students also begin to classify shapes based on their properties. Throughout the year, they complete projects to apply math concepts to real-life applications. This course uses the AbleNet *Equals Mathematics* program.

### **Middle School Math 2 (Grades 6-8)**

Middle School Math 2 reinforces and builds upon skills mastered in Middle School Math 1. Students expand their knowledge of the number system and operational skills, and they begin to solve addition and subtraction problems that require regrouping. They are also introduced to multiplication and division. Students use their skills to plan a party, create shopping lists, and calculate a budget. Students also expand their knowledge of fractions and learn to add and subtract fractions with common denominators. Throughout the year, they

complete projects to apply math concepts to real-life applications. This course uses the AbleNet *Equals Mathematics* program.

### **Middle School Math 3 (Grades 6-8)**

Middle School Math 3 reinforces and builds upon skills mastered in previous courses. Students expand their knowledge of number systems and operational skills. They begin to solve multi-digit multiplication and learn the steps in long division. They apply their understanding of fractions to prepare baked goods for a schoolwide bake sale. Students build upon their knowledge of fractions by adding, subtracting, multiplying, and dividing fractions with different denominators. Finally, students are introduced to decimals and perform calculations with decimals. Throughout the year, they complete projects to apply math concepts to real-life applications. This course uses the AbleNet *Equals Mathematics* program.

### **Math 6**

Math 6 establishes the skills required for Pre-algebra studies. Students study geometric concepts such as area, surface area, and perimeter. Interpreting word problems is an important skill so that students understand the proper situations to multiply or divide depending on context. Throughout the year, fluency with basic arithmetic is reviewed, practicing strategies for arithmetic operations with multi-digit numbers, fractions, decimals, percentages, factors, and multiples. Next, students learn how to divide fractions, and apply concepts of ratios, unit rates, and percentages. They are introduced to the coordinate plane and learn about inequalities, and how to graph them. The skills students acquire throughout the year are applied to real-world situations that relate to consumer numeracy and other life skills, such as cooking. This course uses the *Open Up Math - Grade 6* program.

### **Math 7**

Math 7 builds on the foundational skills students have developed in Grade 6 and further prepares them for Pre-algebra. Students continue their introduction to geometric concepts and the coordinate plane. Students work to refine their skills involving all operations with fractions, decimals, and percentages, as well as understanding and applying proportional relationships. Students solve problems involving scale drawings and working with two-and three-dimensional shapes to solve problems involving area, surface area, and volume. Throughout the year, projects allow students to apply their skills to mathematical skills in their world, such as budgeting, sports and gaming statistics. This course uses the *Open Up Math - Grade 7* program.

### **Pre-algebra**

The topics covered in this course provide students with the necessary skills for future studies in Algebra 1. Students explore transformations of rigid motions on the coordinate plane. Then, students work with variables in expressions, equations, and inequalities to develop the skills to solve word problems by modeling. Students make connections between the equations of linear functions and their graphs. These skills are applied to solving systems of linear equations algebraically and graphically. Students are also introduced to the concept of functions and relations. Finally, they apply the skills they have attained throughout the year

to interpret statistical data using central tendencies, box-and-whisker plots, and scatter plots. This course uses the *N-Gen Math 7* program from eMATHinstruction.

### **Algebra 1**

In Algebra 1, students develop the skills, knowledge, and vocabulary needed to perform, express, and communicate mathematical ideas, and solve real-world problems using algebra. Students develop algorithms for solving and simplifying expressions, equations, and inequalities. Students work with linear and quadratic functions, both as equations and as visual graphs that they create to model their thinking. Through discussions and guided activities, students explore positive and negative exponents and learn how these ideas relate to many areas of study, such as finance, games, and science. Students develop techniques for factoring polynomials that will serve them well in future math and science courses. Students also learn how to use online graphing applications and TI-83/84 calculators to assist them in their work. This course uses the *Common Core Algebra I* program from eMATHinstruction.

## **Physical Education and Health**

*IDEAL's health and physical education programs are integral aspects of our curriculum as we recognize the connection between healthy bodies and minds. Because research supports the connections among physical activity, learning, and concentration, physical education classes meet three days a week. IDEAL's Physical Education Department emphasizes collaboration, team spirit, and effort, in addition to encouraging a lifelong appreciation for physical fitness. Health classes are taught each year, one day per week within the PE block, in order to present students with a forum for discussion and to tailor conversations to developmental needs.*

### **Physical Education**

The physical education curriculum emphasizes the need for physical activity in supporting healthy lives while honing fundamental skills in team sports and fitness. Units are focused not only on learning the physical skills required to play sports but also on how to be a supportive member of a team. Fitness days and activities are part of all units so students can work towards individual fitness goals. A range of sports is practiced over the course of the year, including soccer, basketball, volleyball, and badminton. Students also create original physical games of their own design, presenting and teaching them to the class.

### **Health and Wellness**

IDEAL's schoolwide health curriculum is based largely on the guidelines of the Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States ([SIECUS](#)). Key concepts of the curriculum include human development, relationships, personal skills (decision-making, communication, negotiation), and sexuality. In the Middle School years, the physical, emotional, and social changes associated with puberty and adolescence are a central focus. The curriculum also addresses issues of healthy nutrition, stress reduction, relationships, mental health, and sexual health and identity. Lessons, discussions, and readings are undertaken in developmentally appropriate ways, and some lessons occur in smaller groups. This class makes use of *Teen Health With Health Relationships and Sexuality*, McGraw Hill.

## Science

*IDEAL's Science Department is dedicated to creating an inquiry-based integrated science curriculum for Middle School students that develops foundational knowledge of earth, life, and physical sciences. By developing techniques in experimental design and problem solving using the scientific method, students strengthen the critical thinking skills necessary to question and comprehend our natural and technological environments. Students in each class work on group or individual projects that are presented to the community at the annual Science Expo.*

### **Science 6**

Through inquiry-based learning, sixth-grade scientists begin their journey with an exploration of the scientific method and its application to real-world challenges. Students are encouraged to question and analyze their physical world by learning basic investigative skills like using a microscope or tabulating data through grids and charts. Our newest Middle Schoolers develop research skills, enabling them to evaluate a variety of sources in an age of diverse information. The curriculum focuses on earth and space science but integrates aspects of life and physical science frequently. Topics include the history, timeline, and scales of the universe and the solar system and how the motions of the Earth and moon system are connected to the seasons and tides. Geologic history and plate tectonics are linked with the emergence and evolution of life on Earth. Students cultivate independent study skills by organizing a science notebook and learning to work in small teams to prepare and present their conclusions. This course uses the *Elevate Science - Earth Science* text from SAVVAS Realize.

### **Science 7**

Seventh-grade science students begin this course with a review of the scientific method and measurement, utilizing a wide range of instruments and the metric system. Students hone their skills in researching and gathering data, presenting new ideas, and drawing conclusions. With an emphasis on life science that includes biology and chemistry, students study concepts of evolution and taxonomy through the geological timeline. Students learn through comparative anatomy and dissection how all living things are similar. Topics include taxonomy, cellular structures, evolution, and ecology. Connections are made with the physical processes of earth science as well as contemporary issues in climate change and environmental sustainability. This course uses the *Elevate Science - Life Science* text from SAVVAS Realize.

### **Science 8**

In their final year of Middle School, eighth-grade students apply their research, organizational, and design skills to projects and lab activities that build confidence in scientific investigation. Using the scientific method to test hypotheses, students develop their understanding through group projects and oral presentations while maintaining organized science notebooks. Students build critical thinking skills and master experimental design as

they formulate inquiry-based projects for our Science Expo. With a focus on physical science, the course covers topics including states of matter, the periodic table, and chemical reactions and they are introduced to concepts including force, motion, and energy. This course uses the *Elevate Science - Physical Science* text from SAVVAS Realize.

## Spanish

*Through the study of Spanish at IDEAL, students gain confidence in reading, writing, listening, and speaking in the target language, and they develop an appreciation for the diverse cultures and communities of native speakers. The arts and experiential learning infuse the curriculum as students explore the rich history of the culture within New York City and across the globe and apply their knowledge in creative ways. All IDEAL students are required to study Spanish during their Middle School years, with the exception of students for whom the family, student, learning specialist, and school agree that additional support in foundational literacy skills or therapies would be beneficial.*

### **Introductory Spanish (Grade 6)**

This introductory Spanish class teaches basic reading, writing, and speaking skills to students new to the language while challenging those who already have some foundational skills. Throughout the year, students study the culture of Spanish-speaking countries and communities, building their understanding of people and customs. Each unit is organized into three major blocks: linguistics, culture, and projects. Upon completion, students comprehend and respond with grammatical accuracy to both spoken and written Spanish prompts and are able to demonstrate their cultural awareness. Students select a specific country from the Spanish-speaking world and develop a project which requires them to research and present key aspects of their nation's history, culture, climate, and traditions. The *Espanol Santillana 1A* workbooks are used in this class.

### **Spanish 1 (Grades 7 and 8):**

Spanish 1 is a two-year course that provides daily opportunities for students to continue to develop the fundamental elements of the Spanish language within a cultural context. This class focuses on listening, understanding, responding, reading, and writing. Students learn and practice using practical vocabulary on topics such as school, family, home, community, animals, sports, transportation, travel, and more. The class is taught largely in Spanish to allow students to practice conversational skills. Upon completion, students are able to comprehend and respond with grammatical accuracy to both spoken and written Spanish and demonstrate their cultural awareness with more confidence. Throughout the year, students travel to cultural events, art exhibits, shops, and restaurants to expose them to the rich Latino culture within New York City. The *Espanol Santillana 1B* workbooks are used in this class.

## Leadership, Service Learning, and Social Justice

*Working in concert with the pedagogy and the academic curriculum, the leadership, service learning, and social justice programs at IDEAL foster the social and emotional development of confident and compassionate young people who are able to advocate for themselves and others, possess the self-awareness to take healthy risks that lead to growth and are prepared to contribute their voices and talents to a more just and equitable society.*

### **Advisory**

Every Middle School student is a member of an advisory group, and every advisory group is led by faculty members who support and oversee the academic, social, and emotional growth of the individuals and the group as a whole. Advisory groups gather at the beginning of each day to touch base, strengthen the sense of community before delving into academic classes, Advisory meets for a longer time at the end of each day to ensure that students are organized when they leave for the day and to spend time working on developing skills and navigating the different stressors that might arise for a Middle School child. Students practice mindfulness techniques, frustration tolerance, conflict resolution strategies, digital citizenship, organizational strategies, and discuss issues that might be weighing on them. It is the role of the advisor to know each student as an individual and as a learner and to support the academic and personal growth of each student on a daily basis and in more strategic ways over the course of the year. The advisor serves as the first point of contact and as a partner for parents so that the school and families act in concert to support each child in achieving his or her full potential.

### **Service Learning**

Each Middle School grade selects and discusses one issue to focus on throughout the year. Through facilitated discussions, guest speakers, day devoted to service learning, and partnerships with nonprofit organizations, students are provided with opportunities to learn more about the issue and those it impacts through direct civic engagement. Service learning experiences are carefully scaffolded with intentional preparation and reflection, encouraging students to strengthen their understanding of their role in creating a more just and equitable community.

### **Social Justice Curriculum**

IDEAL's anti-bias and multicultural values are woven into the fabric of our curriculum and school. We support each student's positive identity and social development by directly addressing the impact of stereotyping, bias, and discriminatory behavior, encouraging cooperative learning, and teaching conflict resolution. Students compare multiple perspectives in all of their classes as they develop empathy, voice, and advocacy skills for themselves and others. The annual civil rights research projects allow Middle School students the opportunity to study various aspects of social justice from an academic perspective which also connect to topical issues and organizations. Social justice topics are also integrated into the advisory program. Inclusive education provides students with an excellent academic

foundation and empowers them to succeed in a truly diverse society with self-confidence, acceptance, and compassion. Monthly assemblies in Pioneer Period provide opportunities for students to develop their understanding of cultural heritage and under-represented groups through the lens of equity, diversity, and inclusion.

### ***Public Speaking and IDEAL Talks***

In every academic class, Middle School students are required to present their ideas and work formally and informally on a regular basis. In addition, every Grade 8 student creates an original IDEAL Talk on a topic of personal relevance and interest. In the development of their IDEAL Talks, students learn through critique how to strengthen their presentation skills and hone their material. Students practice their skills and then perform their IDEAL Talk in assemblies before the Upper School community.