



Gateway Middle School

Overview of our Program



Gateway's Middle School provides an environment in which students develop strong academic skills, learn to take appropriate intellectual and emotional risks, elevate their critical and abstract thinking to a high level of complexity, and create enduring relationships with their teachers and peers. Our students build confidence and gain skills of communication, creativity, critical thinking and collaboration that prepare them for life in the modern world.

Empowering Student Mastery

Inspiring curiosity, creativity, and critical thinking through innovative education for a fast-changing world.

PORTRAIT OF A GRADUATE



GATEWAY SCHOOL GRADUATES...

Love learning, work hard, and value intrinsic understanding over external rewards

Have a sense of agency and confidently take action to bring their ideas into reality

Act with grace and courtesy, and stand up for those who need help

Examine the status quo through appropriate intellectual and social risks

Program Features

Smaller class sizes encourage young teens to express themselves and to find their unique voice.

ADVISORY PROGRAM Students thrive and succeed when they feel a sense of connectedness, efficacy, safety, and independence. Gateway's advisory program provides each middle school student with this daily connection. Advisories meet each morning and create a safe space for social-emotional learning and academic mentorship.

ELECTIVES Perhaps the part of our middle school most beloved by students, Elective Courses provide a variety of engaging offerings that give students the chance to develop deeper mastery and skill in their passions, and also to explore with interests in a supportive setting.

SERVICE LEARNING As part of our commitment to develop students' character and their personal, social and environmental responsibility, our middle school students all participate in a range of service experiences in the greater Santa Cruz community.

FIELD TRIPS Classroom learning is augmented with day and overnight field trips (Pinnacles, Yosemite and Washington DC) that deepen learning and build connections between the students and faculty.

ATHLETICS We offer six interscholastic sports for students in grades 5-8, and compete against charter, independent, and parochial schools in the Santa Cruz County Small School League.

LIFE SKILLS Throughout the year we partner with expert service providers to educate students on life skills including mental health and wellness, digital citizenship, eliminating bias, drug education, sexual health and puberty, study skills, student government and leadership.

Core Classes

HUMANITIES Our interdisciplinary Humanities program combines English Language Arts and Cultural Studies/History into a single integrated curriculum. Students develop their skills as critical readers and fluid writers across a range of genres and purposes, while thinking deeply about the geographic, natural, political and cultural forces that have shaped civilization in various times and places. Students come to make sense of the emerging patterns and trends in contemporary society, and their own values and role as a participant in civic society.

MATH Gateway's Middle School math program develops flexible and confident mathematical thinkers. Through our implementation of College Preparatory Mathematics, we encourage learning through investigation, discovery, and problem-solving. Mathematics is taught through a combination of direct instruction, practice, and investigations in small groups. Gateway middle school teachers work with students at their level, providing differentiated curriculum and online enrichment. Our students place into a wide range of class in high school, in line with their abilities and motivation.

SCIENCE The middle school science program engages students with an innovative hands-on curriculum and ensures that students develop a solid foundation in the scientific disciplines of earth science, chemistry, physics and biology. Each unit includes investigation, discussion, activities, writing, and connections to the real world.

SPANISH Our middle school Spanish program uses high school curricula that are middle school friendly to build proficiency in grammar and vocabulary, and explore the geography and cultures of Spanish-speaking countries. The program focuses on developing the four skills of language learning – listening, speaking, reading and writing. While some students come into our Middle School with no prior Spanish instruction, all of our students graduate from 8th grade prepared for Spanish II, and many place into Spanish III in 9th grade.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION Our physical education program promotes habits that lead to a healthy adulthood, not to mention the development of social skills and even improved learning in the classroom. In the middle school physical education curriculum, emphasis is placed on improving students' overall fitness, enjoyment of physical activity and the acquisition of basic sport skills. Students are asked to give their personal best, be inclusive and play with integrity. At Gateway, effort and attitude are paramount!



Mission

To inspire children to lead lives of purpose and compassion through scholarship and citizenship.

Vision

A dynamic and intellectually challenging educational experience rooted in Progressive philosophy and reflective of evolving research.

Goal

For students to discover their individual and collective potential to make positive change in the world.

AT Gateway...

EARLY ADOLESCENTS CAN LOVE

SCHOOL The adolescent years are a period of extraordinary intellectual and personal growth. Our Middle School is a close-knit community designed to support and challenge students to reach for excellence, take appropriate risks, and embrace their inner voices. Featuring small classes, seminar-style discussions, intensive interdisciplinary projects, enriching elective offerings, and a robust advisory program, our program helps students build critical academic knowledge and skills, while simultaneously developing the essential elements of their characters in areas such as resilience and integrity.

STUDENTS HAVE AUTONOMY AND RESPONSIBILITY

Many intellectual, physical, hormonal and social changes occur during adolescence. Early adolescents still need the loving support of caring adults while they are asserting new levels of independence, and also kind and firm support when they struggle. Our experienced faculty understand this complex neurological state and relate well with children at this stage of life, bringing equal parts playfulness and seriousness to the classroom and social environment as they inspire creative, ethical and intellectually curious students.

LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES ARE ABUNDANT

Our small school environment provides numerous chances for leadership through student government, club leadership, coaching, community service or helping younger students.

The elected Student Council officers learn organization and communication skills while

having an impact on their school experience. Through student council experiences, middle school students gain authentic leadership skills, confidence and independence that supports their transition to high school.

HIGH EXPECTATIONS AND STRONG SUPPORT ARE THE BEST PREPARATION

Gateway's Middle School prepares young adolescents for the most rigorous high school curricula by meeting students exactly where they are developmentally. Curriculum is matched to their knowledge, skills, and capacity for abstract thinking. Content is made relevant and meaningful to their lived experiences and their consumption of news and media. Developing strong character as people of integrity and compassion works in concert with our academic program. Our graduates are accepted at the most competitive regional private and public high schools and are known for being confident, self-directed, engaged and excited students.

GRADUATION SPEECHES ARE THE CULMINATING PERFORMANCE OF UNDERSTANDING

Every eighth grade student delivers a speech at graduation. The culmination of their years at Gateway, these speeches give our graduates an opportunity to reflect on how they have grown during the course of their K-8 journey, to acknowledge their changing selves, and highlight their individual self-expression, confidence and self-knowledge. Our alumni come back in force for the ceremony, expressing love and support to each new class of graduates as they leave behind the program and join the ranks of alumni.



GATEWAY MIDDLE SCHOOL