



### INQUIRY-BASED LEARNING

- Nurtures student passions & talents
- Empowers student voice & honors student choice
- Increases motivation and engagement
- Fosters curiosity and a love for learning
- Promotes grit, perseverance, growth mindset & self-regulation
- Makes research meaningful & develops strong research skills
- Deepens understanding to go beyond memorizing facts and content
- Fortifies the importance of asking good questions
- Enables students to take ownership over their own learning and to reach their goals
- Solves the problems of tomorrow in the classrooms of today

[www.teachthought.com/critical-thinking/inquiry/10-benefits](http://www.teachthought.com/critical-thinking/inquiry/10-benefits)

### BUILDING COMMUNITY

Through collaborative teaching and teamwork, our Middle Academy faculty will develop a student-centered learning community with high expectations for *all* students through differentiation.

The foundation of the Middle Academy depends upon collaborative teamwork between faculty, administration and families. We aim to provide a safe learning community which is rigorous, engaging, and academically challenging for all students, and where parents feel welcome.

Most importantly, we aim to build a community where all students have a sense of belonging, and where they can find their niche and passion.



### ENRICHMENT CLUSTERS

The Middle Academy schedule has enabled us to offer an enrichment block on Friday afternoons, including Band, Chorus, Drama, and other possible enrichment clusters depending on students' interest. Students will also be expected to participate in the *Connecticut Invention Convention*.



# CES MIDDLE ACADEMY

A School Within a  
School  
Grades 5 & 6

*“Where Thinking  
Matters”*

## WELCOME TO THE MIDDLE ACADEMY



There are many benefits for keeping our fifth and sixth graders in the elementary school. Our students have the advantage of being part of an educational community with a family atmosphere, they have close relationships with faculty and staff who have known them since kindergarten, they are in close proximity to younger siblings, and classes are small enough to offer individualized attention. The small school model gives us an advantage over large middle school systems where students often fall through the cracks or suffer from anonymity.

### NEW HYBRID MODEL

However, research shows that students in the intermediates grades require an educational program which challenges and engages their thinking differently than the elementary school structure. Based on educational research, we have decided to design an inquiry-based program for grades 5 & 6, which we have named *The Middle Academy*. Students in the Middle Academy will follow a block schedule which offers inquiry-based investigations in ELA, Math, science, and social studies. With an emphasis on critical thinking skills, and student-centered instruction, our fifth and sixth graders will be able to move toward being college and career ready as they transition to middle school in grade seven.

## MIDDLE ACADEMY GOALS

- To prepare students for the rigors of secondary education and beyond
- Improve student academic performance
- Develop independence, academic pride and a passion for learning
- Provide programmatic options for enrichment

We believe that our intermediate grade students deserve more equal footing with their peers. With a few simple structural changes in the schedule and curriculum, we are building a program with a higher focus on academic excellence that will engender academic pride, a passion for learning, student engagement, and independence.

### MIDDLE ACADEMY OBJECTIVES

- Inquiry based and content centered units of study which engender critical thinking and student engagement
- A student-centered approach including, but not limited to, differentiated curriculum
- A learning community which includes students, parents, specialists, administration and faculty
- Collaboration and team work that includes students and parents
- Enrichment and after-school programs which highlight rigor and project-based learning.

*“Give the pupils something to do, not something to learn; and the doing is of such a nature as to demand thinking; learning naturally results.”*

*— John Dewey*



*Students explore the fish ladder along the Thames River. Field Studies are aligned to standards and are integral to the curriculum*



**Inquiry-based learning** is a form of active learning that starts by posing questions, problems or scenarios.

Inquirers will identify and research issues and questions to develop their knowledge or solutions.

Inquiry-based learning includes problem-based learning, and is generally used in small scale investigations and projects, as well as research.

Inquiry-based instruction is principally very closely related to the development and practice of thinking skills.