



SHADY SIDE

ACADEMY

MIDDLE SCHOOL
500 Squaw Run Road East
Pittsburgh, PA 15238
412-968-3100

May 1, 2019

Dear Middle School Parents and Students:

The World Languages program consists of courses in Latin, Spanish and Chinese. All students will understand the grammar and syntax of each language. The curriculum helps students to build a vocabulary in each language and make connections with English word derivatives or cognates.

In the sixth grade all students take one trimester each of Spanish, Latin and Mandarin Chinese. In each class the students learn the fundamentals of the language, and in Spanish and Chinese speaking and listening skills as well as writing are stressed. Students will take a full trimester of each language, and then in seventh grade students will choose from one of the three to pursue for the *next two years*.

Seventh grade Latin continues the introduction of the language and culture of the Romans. Students will gain a broad Latin vocabulary and learn many associated English derivatives. Their analytical skills will be rigorously developed, as Latin provides an ideal foundation in the grammatical logic of European language. Students will also explore Roman culture and its influence through large thematic units such as mythology, history and archeology. The Middle School course in Latin language will provide students with an invaluable basis for the study of other languages, including English, and a grasp of ancient historical factors that continue to define our own civilization.

In seventh grade Spanish, the intent is for students to familiarize themselves with the language and the cultures that various Spanish-speaking countries offer. Students will practice vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation, which will aid them in building their Spanish speaking and listening skills. The units that will be covered throughout the year, such as greetings, daily routines, family, school, etc., are built on each other - ensuring proficiency in the Spanish language for the students.

The focus of seventh grade Chinese is to introduce students to both the Mandarin Chinese language and modern Chinese culture. Students will study basic, practical vocabulary, grammar, culture and pronunciation. This course helps students build basic speaking and listening skills while introducing Chinese characters. Students will learn to express themselves and communicate with others on topics closely related to their own experiences and daily life. The units cover familiar topics such as introductions, home and family, classroom activity, shopping and numbers. Upon successful completion of this course, students are proficient in the pinyin phonetic alphabet and are able to write approximately 60 radicals, 70 Chinese Hanzi characters from memory and recognize more than 200 Chinese characters. This class also introduces students to elements of Chinese culture including Chinese food, calligraphy, poetry, music, movies, painting and crafts.

In eighth grade, students continue their study of the language taken in seventh grade. At the end of the eighth grade year, students will have attained Level 1 proficiency in Latin, Spanish, or Chinese.

All students who join us in eighth grade will take Spanish I and will attain Level 1 proficiency at the end of the eighth grade year.

If your child is entering seventh grade please use this link: http://bit.ly/ssalanguage19_20 to make his/her language choice for the 2019-20 academic year. Please make your choice thoughtfully by **Monday, June 10, 2019**. A change in your child's selection after June 30, 2018 may not be possible because of class size and staffing constraints.

Please call John Curry at 412-968-3154 if you have any questions.