



## Why Choose Capital City for Middle School?



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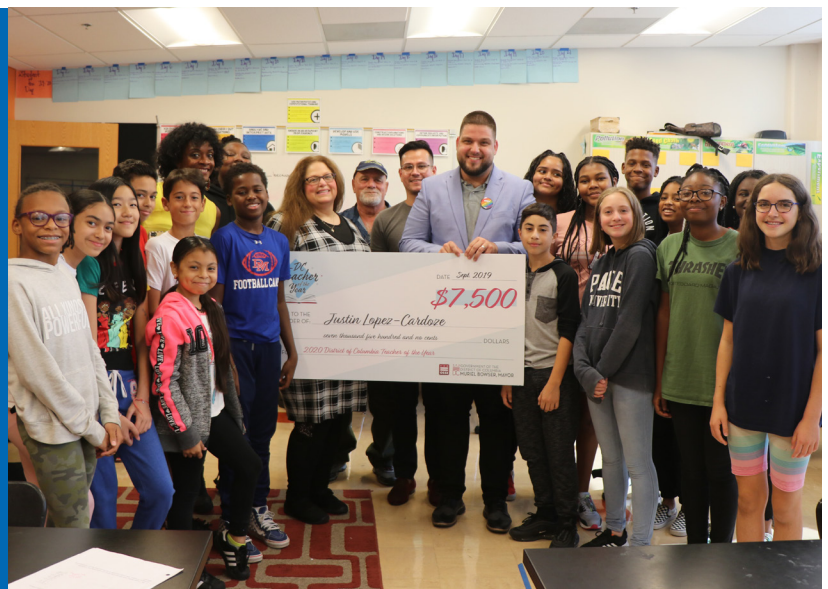
### Personalized Instruction

At Capital City, we offer a small program in which every student is well known by his or her teachers and peers. Intentional structures support our approach to personalization. In our intermediary/middle school model, we have a team of 6 teachers for a cohort of 80 students per grade for an average teacher to student ratio of 1:13. Each student is assigned a Crew leader with whom they meet five times per week and who serves as the point of contact for parents. Instruction is tailored to meet the needs of individual students so that each student is challenged and supported.

Capital City teachers have training and planning time to do this effectively; in fact, Capital City has served as a model for other schools in this type of differentiated instruction. We typically host more than 200 administrators and teachers from across the country and world to share our best practices every year.

“ One of the reasons why I love working here is we get to celebrate our students on a daily basis. Everything is very student-centered. We get to celebrate their academic mastery and their personal growth. We get to celebrate the cultures and the assets that they are bringing to our school. ”

**Justin Lopez-Cardoze,**  
Principal  
DC 2020 Teacher of the Year





## Rigorous and Relevant Academic Program

Capital City Middle School is a Tier 1 High Performing School, recognized by the DC Public Charter School Board. All Capital City students engage in a rigorous program of instruction. Curriculum is aligned with DC and Common Core standards. The schedule is designed to maximize instructional time. Classes are differentiated for students of different academic levels based on on-going assessments. Our goal is for every student to be challenged and supported. Reading and math intensives provide additional time for students to receive extra support or challenges in addition to their regular instruction. We aim for all students to take Algebra I prior to ninth grade and there are multiple pathways and supports to ensure students master this critical course.

A tenet of our instructional approach is that students must be actively engaged in their own learning. Instead of traditional instruction centered on teacher lectures and a passive role for students, Capital City uses the workshop model. Teachers are seen as the coach and students as workers. A class typically begins with a whole-class review, often of the previous night's homework assignment, and a mini-lesson in which new material is introduced. The bulk of the period is devoted to independent work on assignments or projects in which students work alone or in small groups while teachers circulate to provide targeted assistance and make informal assessments of student progress. At the end of the period, the entire class reconvenes to debrief the day's work, communicate about the new learning, and raise questions or topics for further investigation.

## Sample 5th grade Schedule

7:45am - 8:15am  
Homework Center  
(optional)

8:15am - 8:30am  
Homeplace

8:30am - 8:58am  
Crew

9:00am - 9:53am  
Humanities

9:55am - 10:48am  
Academic Support or  
Fitness and Health

10:50am - 11:43am  
Humanities

11:45am - 12:15pm  
Lunch

12:15pm - 12:45pm  
Recess

12:45pm - 1:38pm  
Math and Science

1:40pm - 2:33pm  
Spanish I or Drama

2:35pm - 3:30pm  
Math and Science

3:30pm - 6:00pm  
After-School Clubs & Sports  
(optional)





## Strong Social Curriculum

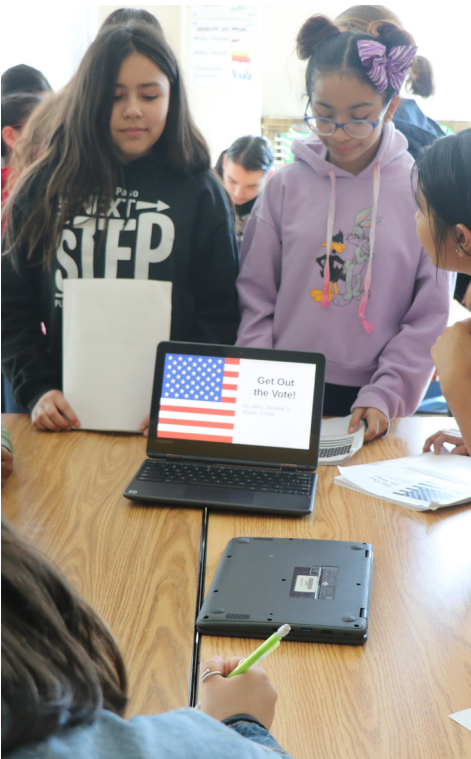
At Capital City, we believe the social curriculum is just as important as the academic one and in many ways makes a rigorous academic program possible. All teachers utilize aspects of Developmental Designs, a program designed to meet the developmental needs of adolescents. In addition, all teachers are trained in Restorative Justice, in an effort to build students' conflict resolution skills. We have a CREW model in the middle school in which each student is part of a small group with 10 students and a lead teacher. CREWs meet five times per week with a curriculum focused on our community values of compassion, contribution, courage, integrity and self-discipline. CREW is a place for students to raise issues and concerns and celebrate successes with peers. CREWs also engage in community service. There is an intentional focus on community and team-building both in CREW and academic classes. Additionally, we have an adventure program in which students engage in outdoor activities such as hiking, rock-climbing, and camping. There are also many opportunities for student leadership in the classroom and school.



## EL Education

Capital City implements the EL Education model and the EL Education literacy modules. Through this model, students engage in inquiry-based learning, which involves in-depth studies involving several curricular areas that teach Common Core Standards. The EL Education literacy modules make content relevant for students and foster deeper learning. Within the context of the literary modules, students engage in fieldwork, community service and work with experts. Each module culminates with projects that demonstrate mastery of standards.

To document and take ownership for their work and learning, students in all grades complete a portfolio of work. Students collect and select pieces for their Middle School portfolios. Portfolio pieces demonstrate their mastery of key learning targets. The portfolio is shared with parents during student-led conferences. In 8th grade, students participate in a more high stakes portfolio passage process to show their readiness for high school work; they present their work to a panel of educators and community members.



## Sample EL Education Module

### *Stories of Human Rights (taken from EL Education Module Description)*

In this module, 5th grade students develop their ability to read and understand complex text as they learn how to bring awareness to human rights issues. In Unit 1, students read the novel *Esperanza Rising* by Pam Munoz Ryan. Through close reading, interpretation, and analysis of texts, students begin to build their understanding of human rights. They also closely read selected articles from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR).

In Unit 2, students finish reading *Esperanza Rising*, focusing on characters' reactions and responses to events when their human rights are threatened. They write a two-voice poem with a partner, as well as a four-paragraph literary essay comparing the response of two characters to a selected event from the novel. In Unit 3, students plan, write, and perform monologues based on events where human rights are threatened. In groups, students write a Directors' Note to describe their selected event, explain which specific articles of the UDHR relate to the event, and explain how people today are impacted by this issue. In this module, students learn to stand up for what is right and contribute to a better world, putting their learning to use to improve communities.



## Comprehensive Arts, Fitness & Extracurricular Activities

We have a comprehensive program of arts, sports, and extracurricular activities. Students take Arts Specials that meet daily for two quarters and can select from offerings in music, visual arts, drama, and Media Information Technology (MIT). Students have Fitness/Health classes four times a week, focused on building overall health and wellness through individual and competitive sports and games as well as health instruction. Students also take Spanish; classes meet daily for a semester. Our aim in middle school is for students to complete the equivalent of a high school Spanish I course. Once per week, students take a technology course, in which media and technology skills are taught and applied within the context of expeditions and other curricular projects. On Wednesdays, students are given an opportunity to participate in an Elective for one hour each semester. Electives are multi-grade (5/6 and 7/8) and allow students to extend their interest in a topic of choice. Sample Electives: African Drumming, Band, MakerSpace, Real Talk, Eagle TV, Improv, and Defining Me. We offer a wide-range of after-school offerings in sports, arts and enrichment activities. We participate in two athletic leagues for competitive sports. After-school activities are free to all students.

### Typical After-School Offerings

#### Sports

Flag football, cross country, soccer, cheerleading, swimming, basketball, tennis, track and field, volleyball

#### Arts

Drama, visual arts, strings, drums, band, poetry

#### Enrichment

Debate Team, MakerSpace, Math Lab, Literacy Lab, Homework Help Centers, Chess



“Our middle school is very transparent about measuring student growth beyond academic achievement, and I think it directly contributes to why so many of our students enjoy coming to school. People care about them as people.”

**Taiese Carson,**  
Middle School Math Intervention  
Specialist

