



MIDDLEBRIDGE SCHOOL



**A PLACE TO
BELONG AND
BECOME.**



Over the last twelve years, we've grown into a 75 student strong 38-acre "mini-Hogwarts" castle located across the street from the beautiful Atlantic Ocean. Here at the castle, our students and staff bring vibrant life and energy to self-discovery, community-building, and keeping our curriculum fresh and current. With hearty doses of optimism, adventurous spirit, and the cultivation of leadership skills to develop our talents, we know from experience that we can achieve anything. After all, we named our school after the nearby Middle Bridge, one of three bridges that cross the Narrow River, an inlet where ships used to seek safe harbor and repair. Likewise, our students find a second home here. This sense of home might be because we specialize in customizing education to meet each student at their individual academic, social, and emotional level. We thrive and grow as a community by listening and responding to student interest in our whole-child educational model. This is why Middlebridge School is widely considered to be one of the leading schools in the country for students with learning differences.

We value each of our students, knowing that every young person brings unique skills and talents to our community. Here, respect and trust must be mutual in an environment where self-learning and reliable guidance co-exist; where self-awareness is cultivated in tandem with wider notions of alliance, citizenship, and global community to lead our students towards their true calling. Here, academic curiosity drives the motivation necessary to thrive in our competitive, highly specialized world.

COMPLICATED LEARNERS are exceptional students, both cognitively and creatively. Yet, for too long, many of them have been viewed through a limited diagnostic lens, having been told by teachers, peers, or evaluators what they're not good at or what they can't do.

Middlebridge is often the first place our students have ever felt a deep sense of belonging. Belonging and respect – and the honest communication that goes with it – extends to parents and families as well. When we welcome a student to Middlebridge, we embrace the entire family in working collaboration toward lifelong student success, confidence, and trust. Because we host these young people only momentarily, we know that our job is to provide a solid foundation. Our students and their families build upon that foundation well beyond their time with us, and extra joy comes through witnessing our recent alumni accomplishments; we highlight these success stories throughout this book.

Our passion is palpable, and I invite you to come experience our community for yourselves.

Sincerely,
John J. Kaufman
Head of School



A PLACE TO BELONG AND BECOME

Our goal is to help all of our students rewrite their individual narratives concerning how they see themselves as learners. We want our students to approach the classroom, and the content they are interacting with, openly and with passion. We want our students to recognize areas of confusion, and understand that uncertainty and frustration are inherently part of the learning process; ambiguity is to be embraced. We want our students to feel safe in the learning environment, and trust that the staff and community will support them as they work to take risks, acquire new skills, and strive for inspirational outcomes. Lastly, we want our students to hone their metacognition to confront their challenges, to utilize their strengths, and to know exactly what resources they need to meet their goals.

While all students at Middlebridge have learning differences, we know that all learners benefit from our teachers' holistic understanding of each of their students, from activities that stimulate every type of learning, to curriculum that ignites self-discovery. Many of our students have experienced some level of discomfort in their prior school settings. Many of our students have developed compensatory strategies that do not maximize their abilities nor ensure that they are learning the proper skills to progress through a curriculum. Middlebridge School meets students at this critical juncture, and seeks to enable lifelong student success, not just over the next few years.

—Sara Callahan, Academic Dean



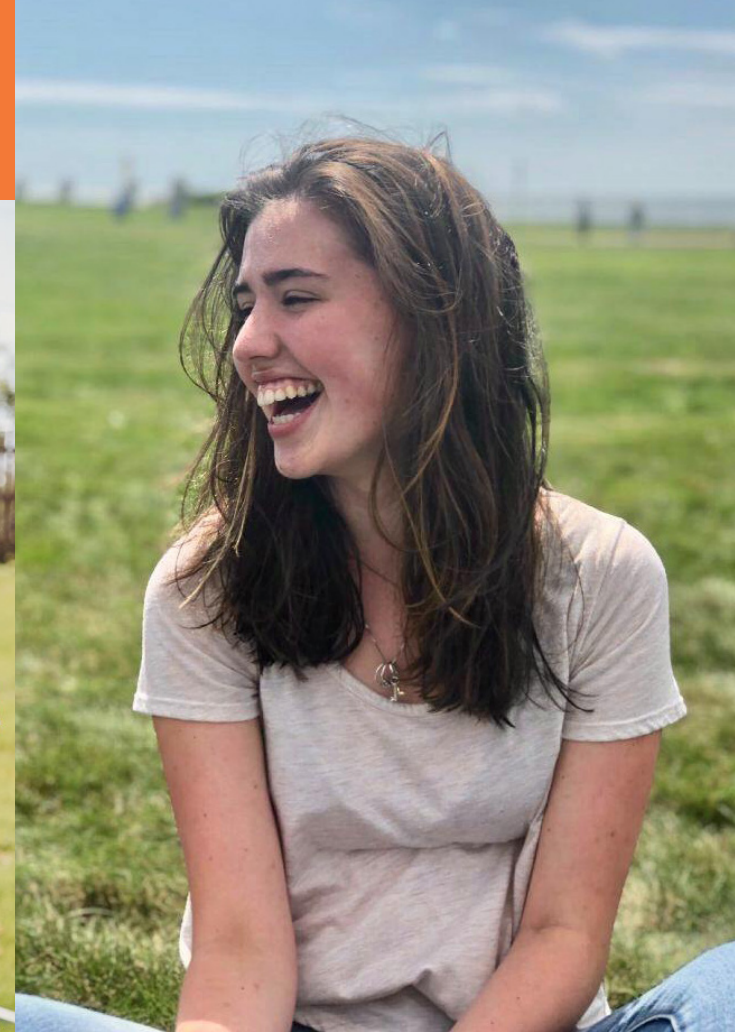
"At Middlebridge, you aren't ashamed to show who you are."

Nicole G. Class of 2019

"You have the time to learn academic concepts in a way that's deep and meaningful here — but the staff help you to make that learning possible and achievable." *Holden K., Class of 2017*

"They're looking for my success, not just to hand me a diploma."

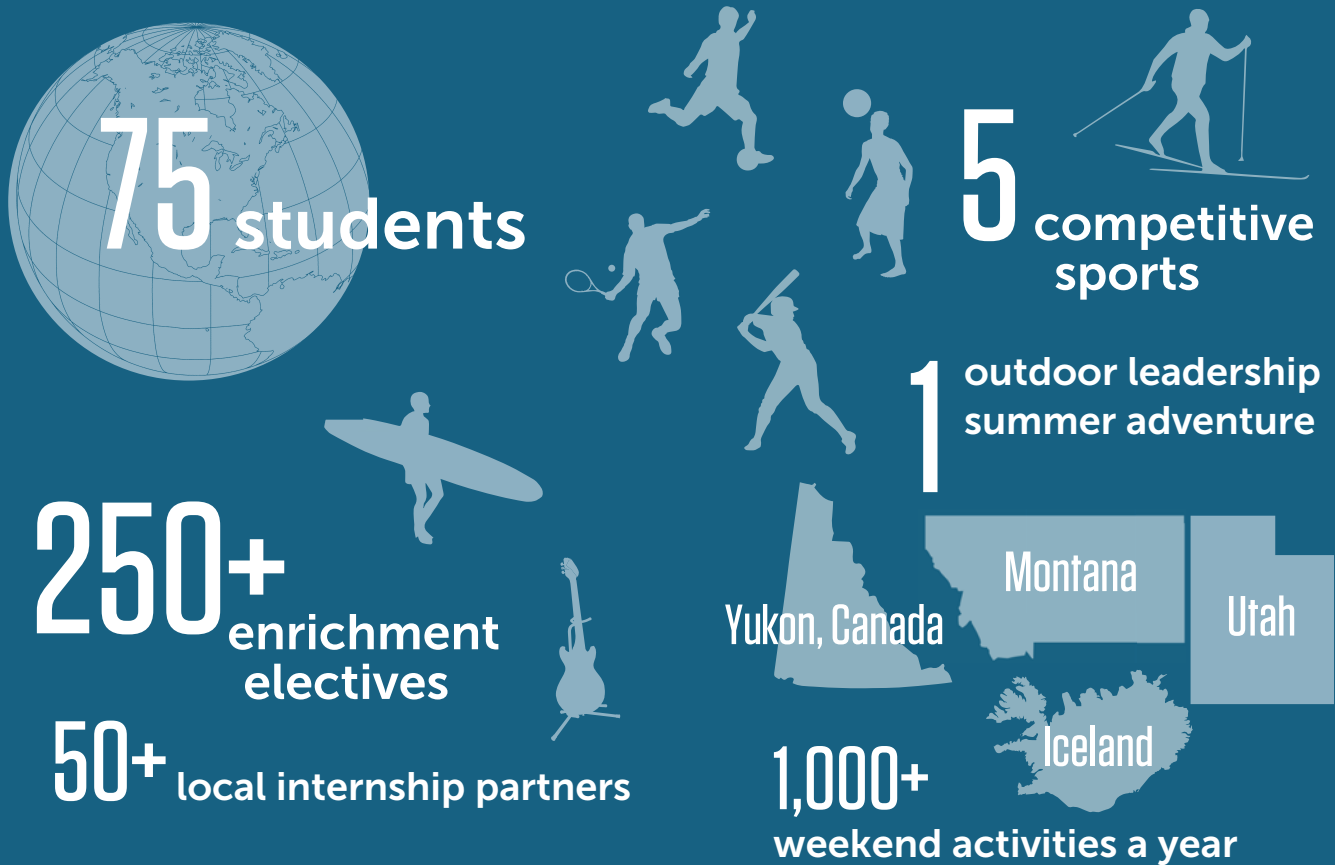
Max C. Class of 2019



DIGGING IN: ACADEMIC CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT

Our classrooms are safe, dynamic, interactive, multi-sensory environments that incorporate language-based learning with visual, auditory, and kinesthetic education. Since students are placed in small class groups with peers who share similar learning profiles—maximum class size is eight—students not only acquire information from teachers, but also gain an understanding of themselves, their peers, and their best learning methods by directly influencing selection of materials and pace of progress. Our teachers are content-certified, and are, as parents have said, “all in, all the time” and “whole-hearted.” Our teachers cultivate success-oriented, nurturing zones in which students can create intimate, meaningful relationships while also creating the strong boundaries necessary for empowered identity.

Curriculum includes instruction in core Academic Classes: English, Mathematics, Science, History & Social Studies, and Daily PE & Wellness. Students additionally have one daily tutorial, one independent study skills lab to practice executive function and metacognition relative to their learning profile and objectives, and one teacher-proctored study hall. Our students are exceptionally well prepared for college: in lieu of AP courses, all seniors are encouraged to take college classes for credit. 97% of our students attend college. But these facts don't portray the rhizomatic learning style inherent to our relationship-based education model, in which academic curriculum, Social Pragmatics & Emotional Intelligence programming, and extracurricular activities complement each other to enable deep longevity of comprehension. In our adaptive academic model, physical and mental health are equally emphasized, as we celebrate each individual's path towards lifelong learning.



“Everyone here is learning to strive and learning to push forward. I wish there was a way that all kids could have a learning experience and community like this.”

Katherine S., Class of 2021



MIDDLEBRIDGE SCHOOL

EMPOWERMENT & EMPATHY: SOCIAL PRAGMATICS & EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

Our innovative Social Pragmatics and Emotional Intelligence curriculum sets us apart from other schools. These daily classes allow students to focus on their potential for social and emotional development, understanding of psychology, emotional intelligence, mindfulness, growth mindset, and resilience. Teaching metacognition, or “thinking about thinking,” through the cultivation of mindfulness, promotes students to become confident, passionate, and engaged adults. Their introspection and subsequent fostering of natural talents is key to giving young people an optimistic vision about the future, directly leading to motivated success and the abilities to direct, then sustain, capability in their chosen fields.

More than 90% of students admitted to Middlebridge are strengthening working memory, public speaking skills, adaptability and empathy. Middlebridge students are complicated learners, so we encourage candid discussions of mental health to de-stigmatize challenges, to universalize human struggle, and to transform adversity into strength. Our students have multiple intelligences, social strengths, and emotional intuitions; self-realization contributes to a balanced personal, academic, and professional life. Social Pragmatics and Emotional Intelligence classes happen daily, utilizing real-time feedback, role-playing, improvisational theater, mindfulness and meditation techniques, and reflexive exercises to align with a student’s individual goals and needs. The curriculum goals are implemented in a customized manner on a four to six week basis. Each unit is designed to give students a supportive space in which to practice communication development, increasing self-esteem, goal-setting, and developing values and identity to understand and label feelings and emotions. These exercises positively inform interpersonal skills, leading to healthy relationships and satisfying careers. It also nurtures post-secondary transitions, where focus is not just on college placement, but on the support needed to segue from our intimate environment to larger college campuses.



THE SOCIAL PRAGMATICS AND EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE CURRICULUM ADDRESSES:

Emotional Intelligence:

Understanding emotions; managing anger and stress; navigating nuanced emotional territory; gaining perspective; empathy; self-esteem.

Communication:

Improving conversational skills; active listening; context and setting awareness; encouraging self-disclosure.

Interpersonal Relationships:

Making friends and maintaining meaningful friendships; understanding boundaries; appropriate conversation; building trust; healthy dating behavior.

Self-Advocacy:

Recognizing need and asking for help; building support communities.

Learning Style:

Understanding multiple intelligences; identifying learning styles; academic and social impact of learning differences.

Social Media:

Setting boundaries; personal security; appropriate use; trusting and privacy ethics; cause and effect.

Physical Health:

Wellness routines; self-care and nutrition; stress management.

Mindfulness:

Meditation as coping strategy; gaining presence in focused situations; physical awareness for stress management; recognizing stress and anxiety cues; constructive reactions to stressors.

Career Awareness and Exploration:

Matching personal values, interests, skill set, and expectations with career planning.

Post-Secondary Transition Process:

Assistance, preparation, and support in post-secondary placement (for seniors and postgraduate students.)



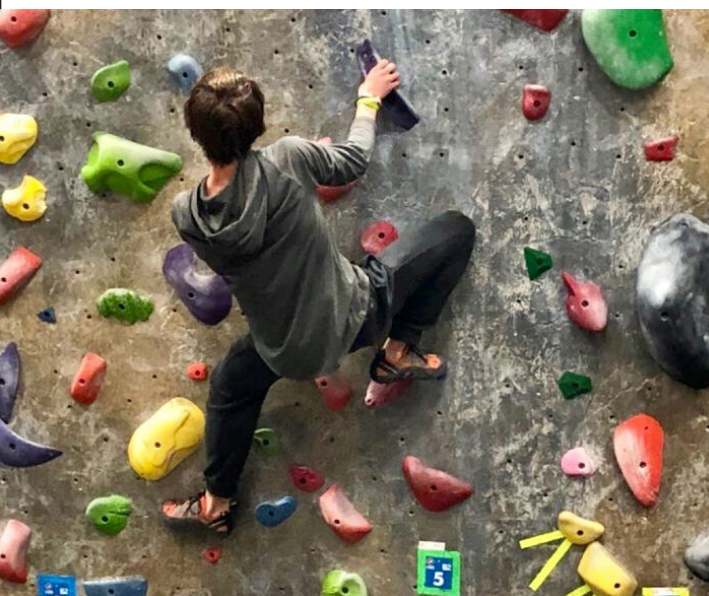
Our collaboration with the Contemporary Theater Company in Wakefield, Rhode Island, is one of the most popular aspects of our Emotional Intelligence curriculum. Improvisation classes are proven to be a cutting-edge method for strengthening working memory, public speaking skills, adaptability, and empathy. Situational exercises, like role-playing, are excellent, therapeutic ways to practice “holding space,” a skill necessary for successful self-management and relational exchanges. That cognizance, as well as knowing how and when to access it, is emotional intelligence in a nutshell.



DOING & MAKING: ATHLETICS & ARTS

Exercise and creative practice make a well-rounded individual, and are important ways to practice being present and mindful in a less formal way. Fitness programming and art education increase confidence, and actually help the brain rewire itself by building more flexible neural pathways. This boosts memory, motor skills, and sense of well being.

Many of our students are talented athletes, and we have five competitive sports teams. Our new gymnasium has a regulation-sized basketball court, with multi-sport flexibility for tennis, volleyball, floor hockey, and other games. It also houses a weight room, cardio studio, and locker rooms. Our fine arts building hosts some of our most popular courses such as mosaics, painting, pottery, drawing, and arts & crafts. A quality fine arts enrichment program allows students to develop self-discipline, intuition, reasoning, imagination, as well as the kinesthetic and visual intelligence they can apply to other subject areas. In celebrating the practice of creativity and wellness, we support the integration of sports and art into campus life, to help students develop healthy lifelong habits.



LEARNING IS FUN: ENCOURAGING EXPERIENCE

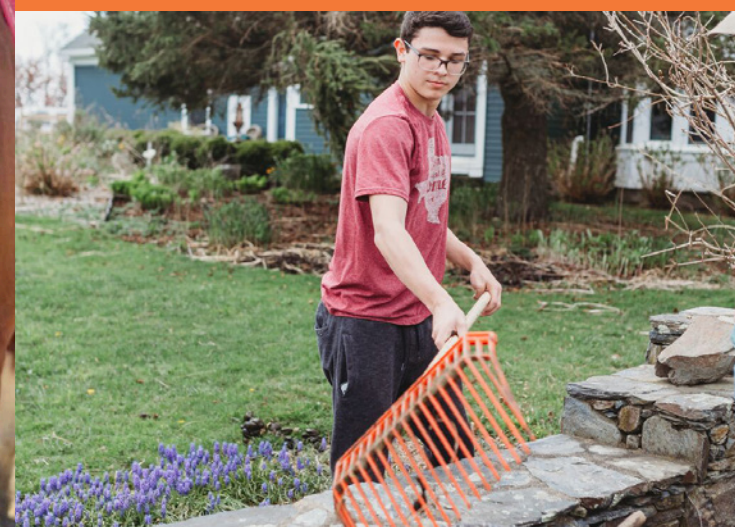
We offer a robust selection of over 250 electives, responsive to student interests and suggestions. Electives classes rotate six times per year and are grouped into six categories: physical activity & wellness; fine, graphic, and technological arts; community service; self-interest; and internships. Some, like surfing, horseback riding, and rock climbing are perennial hits, while others evolve out of trends like coding and E-Sports. Weekend programs are similarly dynamic: students select these activities on a weekly basis, and options include on and off-campus choices divided into various categories like adventure, culture, education, theater, wellness, community service, leisure, and social time.

Many of our extracurricular activities focus on connecting people to nature. Our Summer Adventure program, in particular, teaches leadership and teamwork through wilderness activities like canoeing, biking, camping, hiking, rafting, and riverboarding, led by Breakwater Expeditions to Utah, Yukon, Montana, and Iceland. Instilling respect for ecosystems and humanity's role in the planet's health, deepens daily experience and connects students to a wellspring of support and beauty. Our electives and field trips help students to grow into concerned advocates and enthusiastic citizens, who have clarified values and feel urgency to contribute and to improve their world.



"Middlebridge is about developing kind, caring humans who can function in the world and can face challenges."

Mac Z. Class of 2018



IDEAS INTO ACTION: INTERNSHIPS & COMMUNITY SERVICE

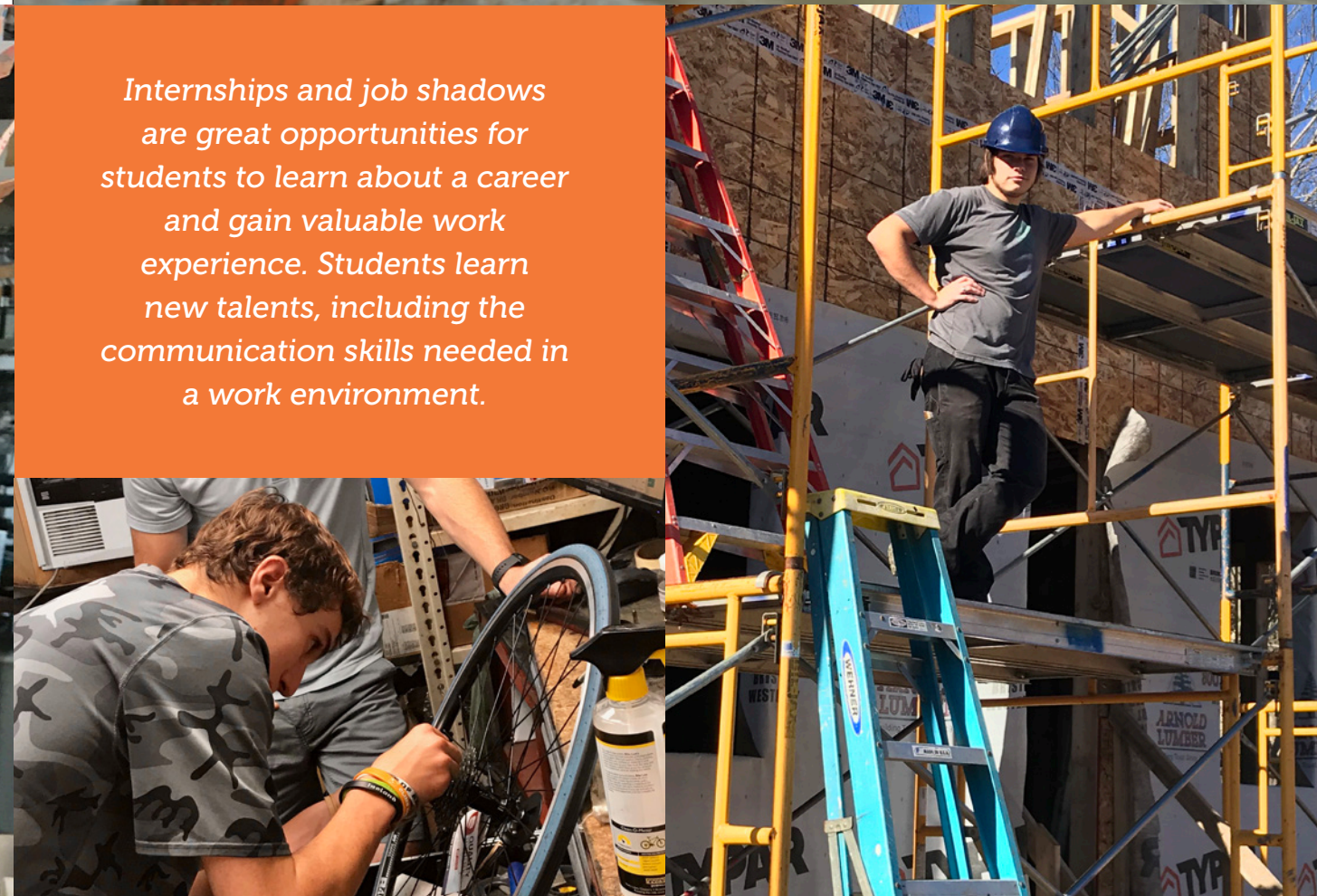
Community service is central to the Middlebridge experience. Experiential learning engages and benefits everybody, while it fosters citizenship and ethics through positive, interactive engagement. To emphasize and support our community service programming, our Lighthouse Internship program allows students to explore potential areas for future study at college and to develop personal hobbies and passions through internships, job-shadowing, and fieldwork. Integrated throughout the curriculum, the Lighthouse program is comprised of four integrated components: career awareness, career exploration, self-exploration, and occupational training and skill acquisition. In our whole-child education model, students need to explore and realize skills, then train and practice them in real-world settings, in order for them to thrive in happy careers. Likewise, current students who continue to give back in community service over their summer breaks report higher levels of happiness, connection, and satisfaction with their communities.

Brent, pictured below, at Sweet Cakes Bakery in Peace Dale, RI. Like many students at Middlebridge, Brent has experienced more than one internship placement, but Sweet Cakes is his favorite. Brent's hope is to one day open his own business, and Sweet Cakes has given him the opportunity to learn about every aspect of owning a local business, including how to create and forecast a healthy budget.

Ryan, pictured on scaffolding. Habitat for Humanity was one step on Ryan's journey to recognizing that engineering is a true passion for him. Following his graduation, Ryan enrolled full-time at the New England Institute of Technology to study robotics and engineering.



Internships and job shadows are great opportunities for students to learn about a career and gain valuable work experience. Students learn new talents, including the communication skills needed in a work environment.



ONE TO ONE: TUTORING & RELATIONSHIP BUILDING

Daily tutoring is useful and enjoyable thanks to Middlebridge's dedicated tutorial staff, whose adaptive, prescriptive, and diagnostic approach to working with our students not only prioritizes skill development, but also focuses on growth mindset: the notion that struggle yields rewards.

Our MBS tutors individually coach students to become the most effective learners they can relative to their learning profiles, personal strengths, and challenges while bolstering students' personal management and executive function skills. A tutor may: work on time-management; task-management; self-management; study skills and test preparation; writing; and stress-management. Teaching students how to self-advocate and to develop working systems for "taking care of the small things," underscores how seriously we take our relationships with students—we build collaboration through trust and mutual respect.

Tutoring sessions are rooted in immediate academic assistance needed, for example with decoding language; fluency; visualization and verbalization; comprehension; and college-level writing readiness. All of our tutors are Orton-Gillingham trained to include explicit, systematic, and diagnostic-prescriptive instruction. Our educators stay apprised of the most progressive teaching practices, particularly in Structured Literacy theory.

Ultimately, our tutors help students transcend diagnoses and prescriptions through adaptive strategies and emotionally sound instruction. They teach in multiple modalities to build from simple to complex thinking. In this approach, students feel successful which opens them up to achieving greater academic accomplishments.



OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Academic, social, and emotional growth occur simultaneously.

All programs must be tailored to the individual student.

Strong interpersonal relationships are the foundation for creating a trusting and supportive educational environment.

For students to meet potential and to create positive growth across settings, strong partnerships with parents and families are cultivated.

Educators must be dynamic and work collaboratively with one another to understand how to best serve each individual student.

Curriculum that is integrated across settings becomes reinforced and mastered by the student.

Students must be taught to develop their strengths and use their talents so they can grow into confident and self-aware learners who are prepared for success in the global community.

EXTEND, CONNECT, EMBRACE: RESIDENTIAL LIFE

Students unanimously consider Middlebridge their “home away from home.” Our community members, somewhat miraculously, become an extended family. Students frequently describe us as a warm, welcoming campus where they can meld seamlessly into the social fabric and be their authentic selves. We have four well-appointed dormitories and 74 full-time staff for 75 students, so we can address individual needs. Community service and engagement is emphasized, and daily life includes a healthy blend of structured and unstructured time. We have a residential staff separate from our academic staff, to guide diverse evening activities. Since food is paramount to personal health, our farm-to-table cuisine is a hit—Environmental Science students tend to our community garden, which feeds the entire campus fruits and vegetables through Summer and Fall as a delectable lesson in sustainability.

“We try to serve the simplest things with the nicest ingredients.”

—Chef Eric Leonard

It takes true bravery to start a new life at a new school, and we continuously hear from our students how this invites self-reinvention. Living on campus reinforces social, emotional, and independent living skills, nurturing bonds that lead to lifelong friendships. If there’s one unified message that our graduates convey, it’s that they wish all students could access this kind of education. Learning generosity, outward perspective, ways to engage change, and citizenship creates profound impact. Middlebridge students understand the gift that they’re given, and want to give back. Come see for yourself. Welcoming is the first step to belonging and becoming.



INTERNSHIP PARTNERS

The following businesses and organizations contributed their time and effort to create volunteer opportunities for Middlebridge students. These experiences help our students gain practical knowledge in the workplace, build student confidence, and increase their participation in the community. We are so appreciative of our fantastic internship partners.

Animal Rescue RI
Art and Soul
Audrain Automobile Museum
Blissful Event Planning
Champlin Welding
Clark Farms
Contemporary Theater Company
Corwin Butterworth
Furniture Design
Critter Hut
Dave’s Market
The Dog House
Durkin Realty
Earth Care Farm
401 Oyster Company
Gansett Wraps

Golf Warehouse
Growing Children of Rhode Island
Habitat for Humanity
Horses Bring Hope
Horse Play Animal Rescue
Jonnycake Center
Joyful Learning Academy
Larllham Landscaping
Lighthouse Real Estate Group
Lovesome Images Portrait
Design Studio
Matunuck Oyster Farm
Narragansett Fire Department
Narragansett Elementary School
Narragansett Parks and
Recreation Department

Narragansett Police Department
Narragansett Public Works
Narragansett Town Hall
Narragansett School District
Pride Martial Arts
The Purple Cow
Quest Montessori School
Rebekah Cook Art
River Bend Athletic Club
Secure Future Tech
Smithbridge Stable
Southern Rhode Island Chamber
of Commerce
South Kingstown Nursing
and Rehab
South Kingstown Public Library

Special Olympics Rhode Island
Stedman’s Bike Shop
Supply New England
Sweet Cakes Bakery
Sweenor’s Chocolates
Trinity Repertory Company
The World War II Foundation
Tuckertown Fire Department
Union Fire District
URI Equipment Team
URI Ram Tech
URI Marine Life Science
Research Center
The Village Inn
The Welcome House
South County YMCA

THE FUTURE IS NOW: POSTGRADUATE SUPPORT

Our graduates are exceptionally well prepared for college, since in lieu of AP courses they have taken college-level courses for credit at Community College of Rhode Island (CCRI), University of Rhode Island (URI), or New England Institute of Technology (NEIT). Still, adapting to independence can be a challenge, so our unique support system for recent high school graduates, the Bridge Program, is individualized towards personal goals through collaborative design by the student, parents, and Middlebridge staff. Pragmatic college preparatory classes, internships, financial management studies, and vocational training commingle with lessons in personal organization, wellness and nutrition, self-advocacy, and social relationships, so that students gain a “clear idea what to accomplish,” as well as build bridges to that accomplishment. The Bridge Postgraduate Study Center is a special residence on campus, where students can focus on the tasks ahead as they near graduation time.



POSTGRADUATE COURSES TAKEN AT COMMUNITY COLLEGE OF RHODE ISLAND

PG COLLEGE COURSES TAKEN AT THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE OF RHODE ISLAND

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| Abnormal Psychology (PSYC-2110) |
| Acting I (THEA-1140) |
| Algebra for Technology (MATH-1700) |
| Art History: Ancient to Medieval Times (ARTS-1510) |
| Astronomy: The Stellar System (ASTR-1020) |
| Basic Spoken French (FREN-1000) |
| Basics of Composition (ENGL-0500)* |
| Beginning Guitar (MUSC-113Z) |
| Biology in the Modern World (BIOL-1005)**** |
| Calculus I (MATH-1910)** |
| Calculus II (MATH-1920)** |
| Calculus III (MATH-2910)** |
| Ceramics I (ARTS-1650)*** |
| Children's Literature (ENGL-2200) |
| College Algebra (MATH-1200) |
| College Reading (ENGL-0850)* |
| College Success (LRCT-1020) |
| College Trigonometry (MATH-1210) |
| College Writing (ENGL-1005) |
| Compensatory Writing Skills (ENGL-0250)* |
| Composition I (ENGL-1010) |
| Computer Basics (COMI-1000) |
| Criminal Law (LAWS-1010) |
| Elementary Italian I (ITAL-1010) |
| Essential Reading Skills (ENGL-0700)* |
| Essentials of Physical Fitness (PHED-1610) |
| Explorations in Biology (BIOL-1007)**** |
| Developmental Psychology (PSYC-2030) |

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| Drawing I (ARTS-1010) |
| Financial Accounting (ACC) |
| Foundations of Teaching & |
| Fundamentals of Mathemat |
| Fundamentals of Web Site |
| General Chemistry I (C |
| General Geology I - Ph |
| General Psychology (P |
| General Sociology (SO |
| Geology: Natural Dis |
| Geology: Understand |
| Graphic Design I (A |
| History of the U.S. t |
| Human Sexuality |
| Humans and the E |

PG COLLEGE COURSES TAKEN AT THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE OF RHODE ISLAND

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| (Continued) |
| Intro to Business (BUSN-1010) |
| Intro to Computers (COMI-1100)*** |
| Intro to Digital Recording (MUSC-111Z) |
| Intro to Engineering & Technology (ENGR-1020)*** |
| Intro to Film (ENGL-1210) |
| Intro to Helping & Human Services (HMNS-1010) |
| Intro to Law Enforcement (LAWS-1000) |
| Intro to Literature (ENGL-1200) |
| Intro to Poetry (ENGL-1220) |
| Intro to Philosophy (PHIL-1010) |
| Learner's Journey (LIBA-1000) |
| Literature of Imagination & Fantasy (ENGL-1370) |
| Mass Media Foundations (COMM-1050) |
| Mathematics for Liberal Arts (MATH-1430) |
| Pre-Calculus (MATH-1900)** |
| Programming Concepts (COMI-1150) |
| Psychology of Personal Adjustment (PSYC-1030) |
| Readings in the Short Story (ENGL-1250) |
| Science Fiction (ENGL-1360) |
| Special Topics in Film (ENGL-2210) |
| Stage Lighting and Sound Production (THEA-1180)*** |
| Stagecraft (THEA-1120)*** |
| Statistics I (MATH-1475) |
| Survey of Western Civilization I (HIST-1010) |
| Teacher Assistant Program Certification (TCHR-1000) |
| Two-Dimensional Design (ARTS-1310)*** |
| Twentieth Century Literature (ENGL-2020) |
| War & Society (HIST-2330) |
| Women in American History: 1900-Present (HIST-2015) |

ALL CLASSES ARE 3 CREDITS UNLESS NOTED
 * IN-HOUSE CREDITS/DEVELOPMENTAL LEVEL COURSES,
 NOT APPLIED TOWARD DEGREE
 ** 4 CREDITS
 *** LAB OR STUDIO REQUIRED
 **** 4 CREDITS, LAB REQUIRED
 ***** 5 CREDITS, LAB REQUIRED





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MIDDLEBRIDGE SCHOOL



The mission of Middlebridge School is to provide instruction, opportunities, and support for students with learning differences. Our community is designed to develop students' academic abilities, intellectual curiosity, and physical and social-emotional development. We strive to create life-long learners with increased independence and maturity who thrive in the postgraduate setting of their choice.



middlebridgeschool.org

find us on:

