

# Course Expectations

Core Standards of Learning (SOL) courses at the middle and high school levels have the following expectations:

- English / Language Arts: Students in English classes will investigate thematically organized literature that reflects a challenging range of historical classics and contemporary selections. In addition to demonstrating a high level of analytical and critical reading comprehension, students will write in a variety of genres, including informational/expository text, narration, and persuasion. A major focus in English is on students' acquisition and application of technical and academic vocabulary applied in written, spoken, and multi-media formats. Formal and informal oral communication focus areas will include seminars, debates, Reader's Theatre, and presentations. Throughout students' English experience, they will engage in a range of formal and informal research tasks and processes.
- Mathematics: Students in mathematics classes will be expected to acquire and apply the language of mathematics, using mathematical operations and processes in authentic, real-world scenarios, situations and performance tasks. They will also develop analytical and critical reasoning in their use of mathematics, including the ability to explain and support mathematical claims and assertions with data-based evidence. In mathematics classes, students will generate multiple methods and use a variety of strategies for solving problems, reflect upon and critique their own mathematical reasoning and that of others, and demonstrate and express their mathematical understanding through a range of modalities (including writing and visual representations).
- Science: Students in science classes will engage actively in the processes of hypothesis formulation and testing as well as scientific inquiry. A major focus of science is the laboratory and field experience, ensuring that students develop the habits of mind used by scientists as they investigate, analyze and draw inferences about the world. Students in science continually engage in the "5-Es learning cycle," including: (1) being Engaged in the content; (2) having multiple chances to Explore it through inquiry-based experiential learning tasks; (3) committed to Explaining what they learned from their investigation; (4) Extending their learning to other situations, displaying growing levels of guided and independent transfer; and (5) engaged actively in Evaluating their own progress and learning.
- Social Studies: Students in social studies are required to demonstrate a high degree of reading comprehension and writing skills as they respond to a range of primary sources, research studies, and comparative text analysis. The social studies class emphasizes student's learning to think and reason within the academic disciplines being studied. For example, rather than memorizing historical facts in isolation, students become historians - examining, comparing, and drawing inferences about the meaning of writings, events and historical figures. Similarly, students will investigate key economic, cultural, political, and geographic themes, skills and concepts - learning how professionals in these disciplines construct knowledge and express insights about social phenomena. Perhaps most significantly, social studies students will analyze and explain themes and unifying concepts underlying the study of various era and individuals, reinforcing interconnections and patterns.