Edmund Burke School | Middle School (Grades 6-8)

History Department

The Middle School history program encompasses American history, DC history, and world geography and cultures, with a focus on research-based projects, often rooted in real-world challenges and problems. Students build skills in reading text and graphic sources, research, writing (analytical and creative), presentation, debate and discussion. Our DC location enables regular field trips to our city’s cultural, religious, political, and diplomatic institutions, as well as local businesses.

6th Grade - Core: Humanities

Students explore American History through a personal, literary, and experiential lens. They come to appreciate how major events, from Jamestown to 9/11, and diverse people and communities in Washington, DC, our region, and our country enrich our lives. In Core, students develop critical reading, research and presentation skills, culminating in an interdisciplinary DC Museum Presentation and a trip to New York City.

7th Grade - World Geography and Culture

Through a course that combines geography, anthropology, history, and economics, students gain an understanding of how the ecosystem and geography of the land directly relate to the culture and people of Latin America, Asia, and Africa. The year culminates in a youth environmental summit that incorporates the research and analytical skills that students have learned into an interdisciplinary event.
8th Grade - Topics in US History

Students take an in-depth look at eight eras in US History, including the US Constitution, Slavery and Abolitionism, and the Cold War. Students do the work of historians: reading and analyzing secondary sources, grappling with primary sources, and sharing their knowledge, in writing and presentation. Simulations place students in the position of leaders, struggling to make the best decisions based on the information available at the time.

Special Projects and Trips

- **6th Grade**: DC History Project, Jamestown Trip, NYC "Comparative City" Trip

  Our three-day trip to **New York** trip delves into the differences between our city of politics and New York, a city of finance. Highlights include visits to Ellis Island where European immigrants landed in the 19th and 20th centuries and the 9/11 Museum and Memorial.

- **8th Grade**: Civil Rights Trip to Alabama

  In our four-day trip to **Alabama**, we visit significant Civil Rights sites in Birmingham, Selma, and Montgomery, building our understanding of protest movements of the past and present. The trip emphasizes a painful part of our nation's history; but more importantly, it connects students with people who peacefully, but persistently, demanded and brought about change.

Preparation for High School

Students conclude Middle School History with:

- a foundation in American History, DC History, and World Geography
- experience completing an intensive research-based project
- the ability to communicate and share ideas through a variety of media
- facility with reading, comprehending, and synthesizing primary and secondary historical sources, both textual and graphic
- an appreciation and understanding of ethnic and cultural perspectives that are different from their own
- sensitivity and willingness to challenge established beliefs, especially in ways that aid the historically marginalized or disenfranchised
- facility with an iPad to research, process, design, synthesize, connect, and share research and understanding in novel ways