

Why Blended Classes at SSM?

Our ScholarShift philosophy emerged as we piloted and implemented blended classes at Shattuck-St. Mary's, but making time for creative and innovative endeavors and the development and pursuit of student passions and interests has long been part of our educational mission. Blended classes provide the following educational opportunities and benefits:

Blended classes provide new opportunities for individualized/differentiated instruction for students, combining the best of classroom instruction with the power of online learning and technology.

- Teachers can use twice-weekly course meeting time for activities like discussions, guided practice with concepts, and hands-on projects, and use online components for information delivery.
- Teachers can differentiate through one-on-one sessions, student-led study groups, and online components.
- Blended classes meet the needs of all kinds of students as students can adjust for their individual strengths and weaknesses in different disciplines. Students can adjust the pace and time commitment, depending on their comfort and competency. Students who need more time in an area can seek their teachers out for additional support; students who want enrichment can move quickly through course material and seek enrichment opportunities in disciplines of interest under the mentorship of their teachers or focus on other disciplines that are more difficult for them.

Blended learning is truly a college preparatory model.

- The leap from a fully structured 12th grade year to a first year schedule in college is significant, and the traditional high school schedule does not provide a transition that gradually prepares students for this leap.
- In blended courses, students prepare for the college model of classes while still within the structure of boarding school. In college, classes rarely meet daily! In blended courses, students are expected to engage during class and independently manage work during the rest of the week, with the ongoing support of their teachers.
- Students learn how best to manage their time on days which are less structured, but with the same daily access to faculty they have always had.
- Advisors are on active-duty, overseeing progress and letting go over time.
- Students are ready for the new challenges of college through increased independence in 11th and 12th grade.

Blended classes open up the weekly high school schedule to allow students to explore and develop new areas of academic interest and collaborate with peers as part of their whole academic experience. This is a core aspect of our ScholarShift vision.

- Students have time to delve into established interests and explore new areas of interest.
- Students have time to share passions, talents, and work with others and to collaborate and grow with peers.
- Students have time and increased opportunities to give back to the community.
- In our ScholarShift model, students use work days to hold an internship opportunity in Faribault or other cities; participate in extended community service commitments; focus on independent research projects, including scientific research; or work in the weCreate Center, developing innovative products, solving complex problems collaboratively, or exploring and developing their skills in a variety of multi-media studios.

Blended classes facilitate the development of 21st Century Skills, which our students will need to succeed in the world ahead.

- We *do not know* what the world will look like ten years from now, when our students are beginning their careers. Our responsibility remains to facilitate their development into successful and happy adults, which means we need to adapt the academic experience to the preparation they need.
- Blended classes provide increased opportunities for collaborative problem solving, creativity and innovation, and digital, media, and technical literacy.
- Blended classes enhance our long-established commitment to the development of critical thinking and critical reading skills, strong oral and written communication, and strong mathematics skills.
- The increased independence required by blended learning helps students develop the resilience and adaptability necessary to succeed in an ever changing world, where new careers and jobs emerge faster than schools and colleges can adapt.

Our blended classes are a new approach to teaching and learning, and we are excited to watch our school grow as the world around us changes. Our upper school students need rigorous college preparation that includes the instruction of our teachers, increased practice with the independence and initiative required of them in college, and opportunities to develop the skills that will best prepare them for success beyond the arch.