



Extraordinary Education. Timeless Traditions. Inspired Lives.

Curriculum Guide

2018-2019

Table of Contents

Introduction	3
Faculty at Denver JDS	3
<i>Divrei Chaim</i> (Words to Live By) and <i>Middot</i> (Jewish Values)	4
Our Approach to Extraordinary Education	5
Pluralism at Denver JDS	6
Israel Education and Engagement at Denver JDS	7
Innovative Education and Project Based Learning at Denver JDS	7
Academic Overview and Graduation Requirements	8
Lower Division	8
Upper Division	9
English and Literacy at Denver JDS	11
Hebrew at Denver JDS	16
Judaic Studies at Denver JDS	20
<i>Tefilah</i> (Prayer) at Denver JDS	25
Mathematics at Denver JDS	27
Science at Denver JDS	31
Social Studies at Denver JDS	37
Specials, Electives, and Other Programmatic Aspects at Denver JDS	42
Art	42
Athletics	42
Creation Spaces (Makerspaces)	43
Options Courses	43
Experiential Education	43
Future-Ready Skills	44
Interdisciplinary Learning	44
Library	44
Music	45
Physical Education	45
Service Learning	46
Spanish	46
Technology	47
Student Support	48
Counseling	48
Advisory	48
College Counseling	49
Role of Assessment and Differentiation	49
Gifted Learner Program	50
Learning Resources	50

Introduction

Our pluralistic Jewish community day school prepares and inspires Jewish students through an extraordinary secular and Judaic education to live purposefully, act ethically, and thrive in the world. Since its founding (with the Lower Division, then Herzl, in 1975, and the Upper Division, then RMHA, in 1979), Denver JDS has aimed to inspire Jewish youth to think critically about the world in which we live and prepare them for the role they will play in affecting it through a challenging curriculum, a pluralistic approach to Judaism, and a warm and caring environment steeped in Jewish values. Denver Jewish Day School is the Rocky Mountain region's only K-12 community Jewish day school, currently with approximately 65 faculty members and 335 students.

Denver Jewish Day School is a full member of and accredited by the Association of Colorado Independent Schools (ACIS). Denver JDS is also a member of the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS). Additionally, Denver JDS belongs to Prizmah, a national network of Jewish day schools, and is a member of the Colorado High School Activities Association (CHSAA) participating in the 5280 League. Denver JDS is governed by a board of directors whose major purpose is to direct the school through established policy.

Faculty at Denver JDS

Denver JDS teachers are caring, knowledgeable professionals who are deeply committed to the growth of their students and creating the best possible learning environment for that growth. They model our Jewish values, acting with compassion, empathy, kindness and integrity, acting as mentors, guides, and caretakers. They genuinely enjoy being with their students and center the learning on them, getting to know them as people and learners, creating lasting relationships, and appreciating each individual student. They are hard-working and dedicated and are given the flexibility to creatively inspire curiosity, differentiating instruction to challenge each student on a personal level and providing authentic learning environments to maximize engagement and impact. They are valued members of our school community, partnering with parents and students and collaborating with colleagues as we work towards our mission, thinking beyond their own classrooms and working in the best interest of the school as a whole. Teachers are motivated by what is best for their students, eager to grow, learn, and develop their craft. They adopt a growth mindset and willingness to adapt and change, engaging in reflective practice and ongoing personal and professional development, fostering their own curiosity and modeling lifelong learning. They thrive when expectations are clear, feedback is meaningful, communication is open and honest, support is present, and there is opportunity for their voice to be heard. They are driven by a sense of purpose, wanting to make a difference in children's lives and a positive impact on the world through their teaching. We appreciate their dedication to our students.

Our *Divrei Chaim* (Words to Live By) and *Middot* (Jewish Values)

Divrei Chaim means “Words to Live By” in Hebrew, and our *Divrei Chaim* act as our guiding principles, influencing and steering everything we do. These *Divrei Chaim* not only serve as the basis of our character development program, but they are fully integrated into all of our classes and student life. Our *middot* (Jewish values) help us to frame the *Divrei Chaim*, offering guidance as to how we enact and live the *Divrei Chaim*.

Words to Live By - דברי חיים		Values - מידות
<p>חן <i>Chesed</i> Kindness</p>	<p>We demonstrate compassion through our thoughts, words, and actions, seeking that which is morally upright and good.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● צדק - Tzedek - Justice: We emphasize fairness and impartiality. ● חמלה - Chemlah - Compassion: We commit to mindfully weighing our actions and considering their effect on others.
<p>יושר <i>Yosher</i> Integrity</p>	<p>We adhere to a code of honor and responsibility, acting with consideration for others and our world and recognizing that we are created in God’s image.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● בצלם אלוקים - B'tzelem Elokim - In God’s Image: We recognize that all people are created in God’s image and deserve our understanding and respect. ● דרך ארץ - Derech Eretz - Way of the Land: We behave in a considerate and dignified way when interacting with others and with our community, showing appreciation for the world around us.
<p>סקרנות <i>Sakranut</i> Curiosity</p>	<p>We approach the world with wonder and awe, eager to engage in the processes of inquiry and learning.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● אהבת תורה - Ahavat Torah - Love of Learning: We engage in our learning of Torah and secular knowledge with a deep interest and passion for better understanding the world around us. ● חקר - Cheker - Inquiry: We commit to learning all we can through continued inquiry, research, and investigation, persisting in asking questions and seeking answers.
<p>קהילה <i>Kehillah</i> Community</p>	<p>We are all part of one community, and we unite in our respect for each other and our responsibility to each member of that community.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● אחדות ישראל - Achdut Yisrael - Unity of Israel: We are united with all Jewish people through a common language, religion, heritage, and culture as well as a connection to the land and people of Israel, and we achieve the most by appreciating our differences and valuing what we have in common. ● כבוד - Kavod - Respect: We honor each other, using mutual respect as the basis of our relationships, even when we have differences.
<p>תכלית <i>Tachlit</i> Purpose</p>	<p>We think, speak, and act with intent, aiming to make our world a better place.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● כח הדיבור - Koach HaDibur - Power of Words: We choose our words carefully in order to ensure that our use of speech is mindful and intentional. ● תיקון עולם - Tikkun Olam - Repairing the World: We are obligated to work toward creating a more just and righteous society and to strive to fix or heal the world.

Our Approach to Extraordinary Education

Guided by our *Divrei Chaim* (Words to Live By), Our Approach to Extraordinary Education outlines a Denver JDS education.

<p>טון Chesed Kindness</p> <p><i>We demonstrate compassion through our thoughts, words, and actions, seeking that which is morally upright and good.</i></p>	<p>We use kindness as the basis of our interactions with each other, valuing all students and their unique contributions to our community.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The <i>Divrei Chaim</i> (Words to Live By) and <i>middot</i> (Jewish values) guide our interactions with each other, fostering empathy and inclusivity. • We recognize that students thrive when cared for and supported, and our love for our students is pervasive throughout the hallways and classrooms. • We cultivate an empathic, inclusive and pluralistic environment where students feel safe and comfortable and are encouraged to grow.
<p>יושר Yosher Integrity</p> <p><i>We adhere to a code of honor and responsibility, acting with consideration for others and our world and recognizing that we are created in God's image.</i></p>	<p>We model integrity in all that we do, fostering emotional intelligence along with academic growth.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We cultivate trust amongst our students and between faculty and students, focusing on social emotional growth through mindfulness, an emphasis on our <i>middot</i> (Jewish values), a focus on our thoughts and actions, and the integration of our counseling and advisory programs. • We emphasize the role of the students in shaping their experience and highlight a growth mindset, celebrating opportunities to engage with challenge, grappling with setbacks, fostering resilience and experiencing true learning. • We value the unique contributions of each individual student and personalize the learning so that all students are challenged and grow at the level that is right for them.
<p>סקרנות Sakranut Curiosity</p> <p><i>We approach the world with wonder and awe, eager to engage in the processes of inquiry and learning.</i></p>	<p>We believe students are naturally curious, wanting to explore the world around them.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our students drive the learning, actively finding their place in the Jewish tradition of asking their own questions and seeking their own answers, and we empower the individual students to be the facilitators of their educational journeys. • We emphasize future-ready skills such as communication, collaboration, critical thinking and creativity, using content knowledge as a vehicle for developing the skills necessary for success in the world of tomorrow. • We promote a love of learning through providing opportunities for students to explore the world around them, ultimately creating lifelong learners who are constantly driven by new questions.
<p>קהילה Kehillah Community</p> <p><i>We are all part of one community, and we unite in our respect for each other and our responsibility to each member of that community.</i></p>	<p>We recognize the essential role of our community, both at Denver JDS and beyond, providing the basis for our learning and extending the learning beyond the classroom.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We cultivate a home/school partnership, working with our families to support students and ensure their success. • We extend our learning beyond the walls of the school through involvement in our community, collaborating with organizations to provide different opportunities and broaden the student experience. • We are committed to Jewish life, Jewish learning and Israel, and we work to foster individual student identity within our pluralistic community while also gaining an understanding of the role and obligation of each individual within the greater Jewish community.
<p>תכלית Tachlit Purpose</p> <p><i>We think, speak, and act with intent, aiming to make our world a better place.</i></p>	<p>We instill in our students a sense of purpose, encouraging them to use their learning to make an impact.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our dual-curricular and dual-language program gives students the opportunity to explore questions not only of "how," but also "why" as they use their Judaic learning as a framework for living and to contextualize and add meaning to their learning as a whole. • We provide relevant, authentic learning experiences for our students by using methodologies like project based learning and experiential education and tools like educational technology to help students make connections between their learning and the real world and to expand the walls of the classroom. • Our students recognize that they are part of something bigger than themselves and have an obligation to do good, and we work with them to cultivate the inspiration and tools to do so.

Pluralism at Denver JDS

Denver JDS is an intentionally pluralistic school, which means that we do not affiliate with any denomination of Judaism and welcome students from various backgrounds. It also means that we foster the value of pluralism amongst our community members.

Pluralism at Denver JDS means being rooted in one's own identity while seeking out multiple perspectives in order to clarify, refine, and challenge ideas and interacting with appreciation for those who think and act differently as we unite in our shared values as a Jewish community.

Our commitment to pluralism is based on the understanding that:

- Our world is increasingly more connected and more diverse.
- Being able to understand various perspectives and effectively interact and work with those who hold different opinions and beliefs is an essential capacity for success in today's world.
- In order to most effectively build our own identities, we must understand both what we believe and hold to be true and also how that differs from what others believe.
- The more we understand about the world around us, the more confident we can become in who we are and what our role is in that world.
- Although our community is diverse, we join together as a community of shared *middot*, Jewish values. One of our core *middot* is the concept of *b'tzelem elokim*, or the idea that we are all created in the image of God, and, as such, we are all deserving of understanding and respect.

At Denver JDS, pluralism is shown by:

- Presenting a variety of perspectives on issues in order to encourage appreciation and respectful dialogue.
- Fostering the skill of critical thinking in order for students to be empowered in their own learning and processing of the world around them.
- Engaging in ongoing conversations about how we mark holidays, life cycle events, and other occasions in order to celebrate the traditions of everyone.
- Providing multiple points of entry and ways to connect to Judaism in a variety of ways and on different levels including religiously, spiritually, academically, intellectually, and theologically.
- Focusing on skills and content knowledge in order for students and families to make thoughtful decisions about belief and practice.
- Setting identity parameters to ensure the essential character and integrity of our community.
- Grounding our understanding of differences in our shared tradition, recognizing that we are all one people and that we are each unique in the role we play.

- Offering kosher food at all school functions and ensuring school functions do not conflict with Shabbat and holidays in order to include our full community.

Israel Education and Engagement at Denver JDS

As a Zionist institution, Denver JDS supports Israel and fosters a connection to the State, land, and people of Israel among our students. Using our entire faculty as well as community resources such as the *shinshinim* (Israeli emissaries), parents, stakeholders, and Israel itself, we follow a layered and developmentally appropriate progression of instruction, both formal and informal, providing a space for students to use primary sources and authentic materials to explore the many facets of Israel and engage with Israel beyond the classroom. Our students will connect on an intellectual, moral, emotional, and social level, gaining a deep understanding of Israel, its people, and its history, while forming their own multidimensional perspectives. They will be critical consumers, possessing the capacity to think analytically and to consider various primary sources in comparison to their own opinions and the views of others. Our faculty, parents, and other members of the community will nurture an authentic and honest understanding of Israel and a commitment to furthering their own personal relationship, as appropriate. Through this understanding of and commitment to Israel's intrinsic place in historical and modern Judaism, we will cultivate a lasting, genuine connection to Israel among all our community members.

Innovative Education and Project Based Learning at Denver JDS

Denver JDS is committed to teaching practices, pedagogies, and methodologies that create spaces and opportunities for students to engage in learning on an authentic level, focusing on the deliberate integration of information, future-ready skills, personal meaning-making, and real-world application and transfer of that learning.

Project based learning (PBL) plays a key role at Denver JDS as a teaching method in which students gain knowledge and skills by working for an extended period of time to investigate and respond to an authentic, engaging, and complex question through a project that integrates student voice and choice, sustained inquiry, opportunities for critique and revision, and reflection, all based around key knowledge, understandings, and skills.

Academic Overview and Graduation Requirements

Denver JDS students are curious, joyful, and enthusiastic learners – respected and celebrated for the unique contribution they bring to their class and to our school. Our teachers, administrators, and staff take the time to get to know each and every one of our students. Differentiated instruction and inquiry-based learning ensure that our students are met at their appropriate instructional level, and they are encouraged to explore questions and learning that ignite their curiosity. Our strong focus on our school’s *Divrei Chaim* (Words to Live By or core values) as well as our Helping Hands service learning program instill respect, kindness, and a sense of efficacy in even our very youngest students. Our school community includes students, parents, and educators who come together from different backgrounds and Judaic observance to share in the goal of creating and fostering an inclusive and pluralistic school community in which our children grow and thrive as learners and people.

Lower Division

Denver JDS Lower Division (grades K-5) is where our youngest learners begin their journey, building foundational skills that will help them be successful through their academic career.

Kindergarten

Kindergarten is intended to stimulate children’s curiosity to learn about the world around them. Our team of top-notch teachers build on kindergartners’ enthusiasm by integrating a project based learning approach, offering hands-on, interdisciplinary projects that encourage children to delve deeper into the areas that interest them and expose them to a wide range of skills and competencies while maximizing socialization opportunities for the students.

First Grade

First grade focuses on skill development across all disciplines through a hands-on approach, aimed at fostering a love of learning. Through completion of a research project, storytelling and writing, and projects, students demonstrate lessons learned and apply that learning. Students build community through collaboration and character development through *middot* (Jewish values).

Second Grade

Tuning and strengthening foundational skills in preparation for entrance into intermediate elementary grades is a major focus of second grade. Students engage in learning connected to cause and effect and focus on their critical thinking and problem solving skills.

Third Grade

Third grade means a transition from primary elementary to intermediate elementary. This year prepares students for new responsibilities and encourages them to work towards learning independence. Third grade students study civics and democracy, exploring their place in the third grade community, the Denver JDS community, and the world as a whole.

Fourth Grade

Fourth grade builds upon previously learned skills, applying them and using them to make connections to the greater world. Students take added ownership of their own learning, focusing on refining their critical thinking and problem solving skills.

Fifth Grade

A major focus of fifth grade is the journey to independent learning. Throughout the year, students engage in hands-on learning with a focus on collaboration and an emphasis on reflection and the process of learning. As the students begin their transition to middle school, they hone their questioning and critical thinking skills. Additionally, the students take on leadership roles within the Lower Division, preparing for their transition to the Upper Division for middle school, made official through the Bridging Ceremony at the end of the year.

Upper Division

Our Upper Division, broken into our middle school (grades 6-8) and high school (grades 9-12) provides the space for students to further develop their identities as learners and doers while still guided and supported by those around them.

High School Graduation Requirements

In order to graduate from Denver JDS, certain academic requirements must be completed during high school (grades 9-12):

- **General Studies:** Eight semesters of English and math as well as six semesters of science and social studies must be completed at the passing level. Students must also successfully complete an additional four semesters of general studies electives.
- **Judaic Studies:** Twelve semesters of Judaic studies (two semesters each year of core courses and at least four semesters of options courses) must be completed at the passing level. Students must take at least one semester of Jewish history as either a core or an options course.
- **Hebrew:** Eight semesters of Hebrew at the passing level.
- **Tefilah (Prayer):** Students are required to participate in the full *tefilah* program each semester.

- **Intensives:** Students are required to successfully complete one intensive each year.

Students who meet the specified requirements can graduate with distinction in Judaic studies and/or *Tzedek*.

Community service is required at Denver JDS in grades nine through 12; the yearly requirement is for students to perform 18 hours of service. Within the 18 hours, students must perform at least eight hours out of school with a recognized non-profit community, advocacy, or volunteer organization.

Administration may modify some graduation requirements for students with diagnosed learning disabilities and/or students who transfer into the school during high school.

English and Literacy at Denver JDS

The literacy program at Denver JDS prepares students to be successful readers and writers. The curriculum guides students from emergent readers and writers in kindergarten to become highly skilled users of the English language by the end of high school. The program starts by providing foundational skills throughout the grade levels in order to prepare graduates to communicate verbally and in writing, gain knowledge, and process information in the 21st century. Small class sizes and differentiated instruction across multiple genres enable students to thrive to the best of their ability.

Lower Division

Literacy in the Denver JDS Lower Division aims to foster a lifelong love of reading and writing amongst our students, to challenge them at developmentally appropriate levels along their individual paths, and provide them with building blocks to be effective readers, writers, and communicators. In order to meet the needs of individual students, teachers use data and observations to strategically form small, flexible groupings for instruction which integrates studies across the curriculum. Our writing curriculum, based on Lucy Calkins, encompasses multiple genres and research skills and focuses on the editing, revising, and publishing process. Reading is built upon a research-based approach, including Orton Gillingham, in order to teach foundational literacy skills in phonemic awareness, phonics, decoding, fluency, and comprehension strategies. A focus on speaking and listening skills help students become effective, future-ready communicators and collaborators.

Kindergarten

Our kindergarten language and literacy curriculum emphasizes individual support for each student at his or her reading level. Students build foundational reading and writing skills using print concepts, phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, and literary texts and engage in the writing process with guidance and support from teachers, responding to questions and suggestions from peers and adding details to strengthen writing as needed.

First Grade

Our first graders take solid steps toward fluid reading. Their reading material varies from simple rhymes to classroom news to patterned stories and beginner nonfiction books. By the end of the year, most students read grade-level chapter books, and some read above grade level. Our teachers provide explicit instruction and support by working with students as a whole class, in small groups, and one-on-one. First graders engage in the writing process and learn more about the different purposes for writing including opinion, informative/explanatory, and narrative. First graders have an opportunity to write in a variety of genres and share their work with their classmates.

Second Grade

By second grade, students generally read and write at a basic level, and they continue to tackle more and more texts in and out of the classroom as they work to become rapid and accurate readers. Teachers put an emphasis on fluent reading (reading without stopping to figure out words) at each child's own level, and students become better story writers as they learn to write basic sentences and short narratives about an event or a character. They become critical thinkers by learning to compare and contrast the same story written by different authors or originating from different cultures. Second graders may also experiment with different voices, writing some stories from a personal viewpoint and others in the third person. They more frequently use the correct spelling of words that they know and use punctuation more regularly. The second grade literacy program includes units focused on comic strips, persuasive writing, historical fiction, and fairy tales, and a highlight of the second grade literacy curriculum is the mid-year Poetry Slam.

Third Grade

Third graders learn what it takes to be a good reader and writer. They have a better handle on what to do when they do not understand a word or passage, like looking at pictures in a book for clues. They often discuss books in small groups and ask questions about what they are reading. They summarize and use graphs to organize their thoughts about the books they read. Their teacher will introduce many literary genres (including fiction, fantasy, nonfiction, poetry) and a variety of print forms such as newspapers, magazines, and websites. Third graders also learn organizational methods that help them prepare for more complex writing assignments. They create maps, webs, and Venn diagrams (diagrams used to compare and contrast two things) to plan their work. They write research reports, creative fiction, and personal narratives. They are also asked to take more responsibility for the writing process including revising, editing, and proofreading. A highlight of the third grade literacy curriculum is the author Skype series, and units include the project based Fairy Tale unit and the Melvin Bubble perspective writing project.

Fourth Grade

Fourth graders become sophisticated readers. They can use root words, context clues, and word endings to figure out new words. They spend long periods of time reading and writing on their own expository informational texts. Fourth graders relate characters and other story elements to their own lives and empathize with the characters most like them. Fourth graders also begin to use research tools such as a dictionary, encyclopedia, library, and the Internet to gather information independently on a topic. Most importantly, they start to learn to organize this information into paragraphs, essays, projects, and presentations that help students synthesize their learning. They develop a writing style where their personality comes through as well as skills to help them edit their work. Key fourth grade literacy units include personal narrative and poetry.

Fifth Grade

Fifth grade literacy is largely integrated into science and social studies through project based learning in units such as “Natural Disasters,” “Sustainable Energy,” and “Immigration.” Students analyze characters, plot, and settings as well as recognize an author’s purpose for writing and his or her organizational strategies. Students become skillful writers with their own individual styles. They produce and present research projects and write more complex narratives and creative fiction. They edit their writing, using what they have learned about the rules of grammar, spelling, and punctuation, and they are encouraged to explore writing for personal expression, putting their often intense feelings onto paper through autobiographical writing, poetry, stories, and song writing.

Upper Division

The Upper Division English program at Denver JDS prepares students to be successful communicators in the classroom, in the workplace, and in the world. The curriculum is organized into eight courses, each with small class sections, that correlate to state standards with a wide variety of student types, learning styles, and differentiation methods. Each course includes writing development, research skills, reading comprehension, and vocabulary expansion. Students read and analyze a variety of literature including fiction, nonfiction, poetry, short stories, and dramas. Additionally, students improve upon their writing skills each year through the process of researching, editing, and proofreading. Students are required to be enrolled in an English course each year in the Upper Division. In high school, students have the opportunity to take two Advanced Placement courses: Literature and Language and Composition.

Required Classes

- Sixth Grade English
- Seventh Grade English
- Eighth Grade English
- World Literature
- American Literature

Elective Classes

- Language and Composition
- AP Language and Composition
- AP Literature

Sixth Grade English

In the sixth grade, literature students explore the fundamentals of short stories and novels and make connections to the world around them through reading and writing.

Students read and analyze various pieces of literature for deeper understanding, recognizing theme, symbols, simile, metaphor, and other literary techniques.

Seventh Grade English

Seventh Grade English is a combination of writing and literature, as students are introduced to MLA format, research and argumentative writing, along with various literary terms. Topics for writing include mastery of a five paragraph essay, including the ability to write an effective hook, thesis, body paragraph, counterclaim, and conclusion. Students are introduced to MLA format and write essays including research, persuasive, narrative, and argumentative. When working with literature, topics include identifying themes, foreshadowing, and flashbacks, along with explaining and identifying direct and indirect characterization. Novels such as *The Giver*, *The Outsiders*, and *The Diary of Anne Frank* are traditionally read.

Eighth Grade English

Eighth grade students will learn to read critically with full comprehension across genres and be able to communicate through effective writing. As students develop critical reading and writing skills, they will make important life connections.

World Literature

This course, typically for ninth graders, builds upon the skills mastered in both seventh and eighth grade in the areas of reading, writing, speaking, listening, and critical thinking. The class literature and writing assessments focus on the exploration of point of view and perspective across a wide variety of literary genres. Students continue to work with MLA format as bibliographies, in-text citations, and quote modifications are focused upon. Writing and oral presentations are designed to develop students' critical thinking skills. Novels and plays such as *Lord of the Flies*, *Old Man and the Sea*, *Animal Farm*, and *Romeo and Juliet* are traditionally read.

American Literature

In this 11th grade course, readings include (but are not limited to) novels, short stories, poetry, and plays to improve reading comprehension, examine literary genres and apply literary terms. Writing covers a variety of styles, among them analytical, journalistic, and creative. As they read, students consider how a work's form creates meaning as they consider structure, style, point of view, tone and theme, as well as more particular uses of figurative language. Writing instruction includes attention to developing and organizing ideas in clear, coherent, and persuasive language and attention to precision and clarity.

AP Language and Composition

The AP English Language and Composition course aligns to an introductory college-level rhetoric and writing curriculum, which requires students to develop evidence-based analytic and argumentative essays that proceed through several stages or drafts.

Students evaluate, synthesize, and cite research to support their arguments. Throughout the course, students develop a personal style by making appropriate grammatical choices. Additionally, students read and analyze the rhetorical elements and their effects in non-fiction texts, including graphic images as forms of text, from many disciplines and historical periods.

Language and Composition

This course, at a college preparatory level, has students evaluate, synthesize, and cite research to support their arguments. Throughout the course, students develop a personal style by making appropriate grammatical choices. Additionally, students read and analyze the rhetorical elements and their effects in non-fiction texts, including graphic images as forms of text, from many disciplines and historical periods.

AP Literature and Composition

The AP English Literature and Composition course aligns to an introductory college-level literary analysis course. The course engages students in the close reading and critical analysis of imaginative literature to deepen their understanding of the ways writers use language to provide both meaning and pleasure. As they read, students consider a work's structure, style, and themes, as well as its use of figurative language, imagery, symbolism, and tone. Writing assignments include expository, analytical, and argumentative essays that require students to analyze and interpret literary works.

Hebrew at Denver JDS

The Hebrew program at Denver JDS fosters growth among our students towards proficiency in the areas of reading, writing, speaking, and listening comprehension. Using authentic materials such as stories, poems, and short films, the Hebrew program fosters a connection to the land, State, and people of Israel while also connecting our students with Jews across time and space, strengthening their Jewish identities. Students are then able to apply their Hebrew skills to help them unlock traditional Jewish texts written in Hebrew. Hebrew is taught primarily in Hebrew by native Israelis using diverse teaching styles, and the acquisition of language is done in a supportive and challenging environment that leads to discussions, collaboration, and critical thinking.

Lower Division

In the Lower Division, Hebrew is taught through meaningful, productive, and inspiring exposure to the language. We focus on laying the foundation of speaking, reading, listening, and writing skills through the use of Hebrew literature, music, and engaging activities. We strive to strengthen the students' connection to the land of Israel by exposing them to Israeli culture.

Kindergarten

For kindergarteners, dual-language learning in both English and Hebrew is a core aspect of the program. Students learn that letters and sounds go together to form words and how to identify English and Hebrew alphabet letters and their sounds. Many kindergarten students will know how to identify words in both languages by the end of the year.

First Grade

First grade students begin with the Tal AM Hebrew curriculum, continuing to focus on the four basic literacy skills: reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Teachers use a variety of creative and colorful media to engage students in learning, including songs and melodies. By the end of the year, most students can write short Hebrew sentences and stories, and they are introduced to Hebrew script. Each day, first graders conduct short conversations in Hebrew. Israel and its importance to the Jewish people is an important theme in the first grade Hebrew classroom.

Second Grade

Continuing their study of Hebrew language using the Tal AM curriculum, second grade students devote much time to continuing to foster the four basic literacy skills: reading, writing, speaking, and listening. The focus of the year is for students to see Hebrew as a language through which they can communicate with each other and with the world. By the end of the year, many students can read from a variety of Hebrew texts, including their *siddur* (prayer book). They can also locate specific information within the text and respond to questions about the text both orally and in writing. Students read and write in Hebrew script and compose simple sentences, riddles, questions, and answers using grade-level vocabulary and proper grammar.

Third Grade

Third grade students continue their Hebrew studies in the Tal AM, learning vocabulary to converse about everyday life. A major theme this year is the *B'hatzlacha* unit, in which students explore *klalim* (principles for successful learning) and the ways to ensure fruitful and productive study. They explore their own and fellow students' traits and explore all that is involved in creating a successful learning community. Later in the year, students engage in a project based learning unit on Israel. This unit, which integrates Hebrew and social studies, focuses on different locations/cities in Israel and gives students the opportunities to ask and investigate their own questions regarding the State.

Fourth Grade

Fourth grade students continue to work on all four aspects of language acquisition: speaking, reading, listening, and writing through the Tal AM curriculum. They write sentences and paragraphs in Hebrew, focusing on learning to write in past tense. Discussions in Hebrew and reading of important Hebrew works continue to develop the Hebrew skills in the students, and students also work toward reading Hebrew text without vowels. A major focus of the fourth grade curriculum is the concepts of community and appreciation for diversity in our community. Students continue developing Hebrew reading, writing, and understanding using workbooks, posters, and songs as a means of Hebrew immersion. Fourth graders have many opportunities throughout the school year to write and perform presentations in Hebrew, study historical Israel, and explore the culture and vibrancy of the modern State of Israel. In a culminating project, fourth graders research and learn about places in Israel and become virtual tour guides in a classroom presentation about the Jewish homeland.

Fifth Grade

Fifth graders continue to work on their Hebrew reading, writing, comprehension, and conversational abilities through Tal AM, continuing to build their accuracy, fluency, and proficiency. Students are expected to write paragraphs of greater complexity and length than in previous years and to compose dialogues, essays, plays, and fables in Hebrew. Students are able to form grammatically correct written sentences using singular and plural verbs in past and present tense, with both male/female genders. A highlight of this year is the weekly Hebrew Buddies program through which our fifth graders pair up with kindergarten buddies. The fifth graders create and lead Hebrew lessons, games, and activities for their young friends.

Upper Division

In the Upper Division, the main goal for our Hebrew program is to facilitate our students' proficiency in reading, speaking, writing, and listening. At each grade level, the curriculum spirals as we revisit themes from previous years with a different emphasis. We use the benchmarks

from American Council for Teaching Foreign Language (ACTFL) as the basis for our curriculum as well as integration of future-ready skills (such as collaboration and communication) and the school's *Divrei Chaim* (Words to Live By) and *middot* (Jewish values). Our curriculum includes relevant texts, vocabulary, and grammar instruction. Each unit is contextualized within a specific subject or theme, and most of our exercises are embedded in a framework such as Jewish tradition or Israeli culture.

Hebrew Immersion Program (HIP) and Ambassadors Ramat HaNegev Teens (ART)

The Hebrew Immersion Program (HIP) and Ambassadors Ramat HaNegev Teens (ART) are programs entirely unique to Denver JDS aimed at fostering proficiency in the Hebrew language as well as a connection to Israel and Israelis. For HIP, our 10th graders travel to Israel for a six-week program during which they engage in Ulpan (intensive and immersive Hebrew language studies), experience *gadna* (the Israeli army), and connect with different sites within the State. Earlier in the year, the 10th graders help welcome students from our partnership region, Ramat HaNegev, for two weeks during which our students and the Israeli students get to know each other and learn about each other's cultures, forming the basis for continued connections while on HIP.

Classes

- Sixth Grade Hebrew (levels: novice, intermediate, advanced)
- Seventh and Eighth Grade Hebrew (levels: novice, intermediate, advanced)
- Ninth and Tenth Grade Hebrew (levels: novice, intermediate, advanced)
- Eleventh and Twelfth Grade Hebrew (levels: novice, intermediate, advanced)
- *Mechinah* (preparatory) Hebrew classes for students who are new to Hebrew

All Upper Division Hebrew classes endeavor to build the students' capacity in both written and spoken Hebrew. Students learn how to function in Hebrew in the four skill areas of the language. Primary emphasis is placed upon oral communication and reading comprehension. In keeping with our mission, our native Hebrew faculty teach language skills while also imparting knowledge of Jewish and Israeli culture and history. To enlarge vocabulary and conversational skills, a range of prescribed topics are covered each year. Teachers are also ready to pursue student-generated topics whenever possible.

A selection of the wide range of topics addressed in Hebrew classes in the Upper Division include:

6th Grade: Life as a new student in the Upper Division, social relationships and friendship, weather, the school building, school schedules, academic topics, numbers and colors.

7th and 8th Grade: Family roots, family relationships, dwellings, clothes and shopping, nutrition for teens, history of the modern Hebrew language.

9th and 10th Grade: The media, Israeli newspapers, Israeli films, the natural environment in Colorado in contrast to the natural environment in Sde-Boker, preparing for Hebrew immersion in Israel, the impact of the Holocaust on Israeli society, Israeli art.

11th and 12th Grade: World events, Israeli culture and politics, Jewish heroes, dreams, Eliezer Ben Yehuda, Israeli literature.

Judaic Studies at Denver JDS

The Judaic studies program at Denver JDS empowers students to develop their Jewish identities through literacy and skills in an atmosphere that promotes growth in all areas. Our learning environment is infused with our *Divrei Chaim* (Words to Live By) and *middot* (Jewish values), and we promote a respectful and open environment, allowing students to think critically when analyzing text. Through our learning of Jewish text, our students understand the origin of Jewish practice, customs, and life in a way that fosters connection to Judaism at home and in their communities.

In addition to Judaic studies classes, students in each division also participate in daily *tefilah* (prayer). The *tefilah* program at Denver JDS provides a space for students to connect to the community through prayer, to regularly take time to reflect and connect while developing kindness, curiosity, integrity, and purpose, and to explore their relationship with God and spirituality. Students develop the skills needed to be a part of a *davening* (praying) community and are knowledgeable about the meaning of the *tefilot* (prayers) and also gain an appreciation for different modalities of *tefilah* within the American Jewish community.

Lower Division

The Judaic studies program in the Lower Division focuses on engendering a love of and pride in being Jewish in the context of being a helpful member of the world society. We take a pluralistic approach, appreciating all Jewish practices and allowing our students to feel part of one large family. Character development based on our *Divrei Chaim* (Words to Live By) and *middot* (Jewish values) is a priority throughout the school. We emphasize learning texts in their original language and fostering a connection to the land, people, and State of Israel. As a part of this, we study texts and traditions to learn more about our history and heritage.

Kindergarten

The kindergarten Judaic studies program is often integrated into the study of other subjects and focuses on understanding our traditions and *middot* (values), their relevance to our students' lives, and how they connect to the world at large. Students learn a new *middah* each month and are encouraged to practice it in their daily lives. They study Torah by learning the weekly Torah portion and discussing the stories and lessons learned from the history of the Jewish nation. Classroom lessons include the studying of various holidays throughout the year, focusing on associated traditions and customs, and learning the daily *tefilot* (prayers) as a way to say thank you and express their gratitude.

First Grade

First graders revisit Jewish holidays they learned in kindergarten and learn about the associated blessings, history, and customs of each. Students also learn about the Jewish calendar and *gematria* (the numerical value of each number), continuing with study of the weekly Torah portion with a focus on exploring the connection between

different sections of the text and integrating Hebrew vocabulary into the study. Project based learning (PBL) fosters the students' interest in and knowledge of Israel. In *tefilah* (prayer), students learn to chant the weekday morning prayers and take turns leading the class. Additionally, our first graders participate in *Chagigat HaSiddur* celebration, receiving the prayer book they will use throughout their time in the Denver JDS Lower Division.

Second Grade

The second grade Judaic studies program adds a new layer to students' previous studies. While learning about the holidays, students also explore the Hebrew calendar, recognizing the role of each holiday in that calendar and the associated customs. Torah study expands to involve both learning of *parshat hashavuah* (the portion that is traditionally read each week) and the more in-depth *Chumash* (bible) study, focusing on the narratives of creation, Noah, Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Esau, and Jacob and Rachel. In each unit, students focus on the universal and timeless lessons of the text and how to apply those lessons to their own lives. In *tefilah* (prayer), students focus on reading the text of the prayers and understanding the meaning of the words. The big celebration of second grade is the annual *Chagigat HaChumash* (a celebration where students receive their own *Chumash*).

Third Grade

The third grade Judaic studies program focuses on character development with an emphasis on *middot* (Jewish values) through both classroom learning and hands-on activities. Torah study continues with careful examination of portions of the Book of Genesis in the *Chumash* (bible) and a focus on understanding the text in Hebrew. Additionally, students work on the skills of asking questions about the text and considering possible answers. A major focus of *Chumash* studies is Abraham's life and the character traits we can learn from him. Through weekly discussions of *parashat hashavuah* (the Torah portion traditionally read each week), students engage in discussions about how to apply the teachings of text to their everyday lives. The Jewish holidays are also a focus of the year, allowing the students to add onto their previous study and make personal meaning of these days.

Fourth Grade

The fourth grade Judaic studies curriculum integrates our *middot* (Jewish values) throughout the year. In *Chumash* (bible) study, students use the narratives of Avraham and his descendants to focus on critical thinking by questioning and analyzing the text in an attempt to understand the lessons that are being taught and how they apply to our lives today. Students explore different narratives from the perspectives of the characters in order to gain deeper insights on the lessons being taught and begin to use commentaries to add additional layers to their learning. Holidays are also integrated into the classroom, encouraging students to add a deeper level of understanding to these special days and their importance in our lives. *Tefilah* (prayer) focuses on *minchah* (the

afternoon service) and the blessings of the *Amidah* (standing) prayer. Additionally, students learn about the importance of the Jewish community and the great value that it adds to our lives within our school community.

Fifth Grade

The fifth grade Judaic studies program continues to emphasize character development through *middot* (Jewish values) and skill building. *Parashat hashavuah* (the Torah portion traditionally read each week) continues throughout the year and focuses on student-driven discussion, while *Chumash* (bible) studies focus on the Book of Exodus with different commentaries. Students also study the Jewish holidays using primary sources such as the text of the Torah and *Mishnah* (part of the oral tradition), emphasizing understanding the reasons for the customs and how we relate to them. Additionally, the students are introduced to American Jewish history including WWII, the Holocaust, and the creation of the State of Israel, focusing on their place in this ongoing chain. In *tefilah* (prayer), the students attain proficiency in the daily morning prayer service as well as parts of other services.

Upper Division

In the Upper Division, students engage in thoughtful study of Jewish text, classic and contemporary thought, millennia of history, *tzedek* (justice) and *tefilah* (prayer) through formal discussion, *chevruta* (partner) study, and personal reflection. Students think critically about the sources before them and seek a connection to their own lives while developing the ability to articulate their views clearly and confidently. Our graduates become thoughtful citizens who seek out knowledge from a variety of sources in order to continuously develop and deepen their understanding of Judaism and its role in their lives.

Core Classes

- Sixth Grade *Bamidbar* and *Mishnah*
- Seventh Grade *Bereishit*
- Seventh Grade *Mishnah Brachot*
- Eighth Grade Intro to Talmud and *Halachah*
- Honors Talmud
- Moving through *Mishnah*
- Book of Samuel
- *Mitzvot*
- Book of Kings

Sixth Grade Bamidbar and Mishnah

Students become acquainted with the various literary elements, methods, dialogue, and structure of the *Mishnah* (part of the oral tradition). In addition to the *Mishnah*, students study the book of *Bamidbar* in depth throughout the year.

Bereishit

Students learn highlights from each portion, using a variety of Torah commentary, and also share their perspectives from the weekly Torah portion.

Mishnah

Students learn the *Mishnayot* (oral traditions) of *Masechet Berachot* while developing a common language for Talmud study.

Intro to Talmud and Halachah

A brief history and introduction to the skill of learning Talmud and how the process of Jewish law develops from the Talmud.

Moving Through Mishnah

This course takes students through the vast world of Jewish thought and practice as seen through the *Mishnah* (oral Torah).

Book of Samuel

This class covers the Book of Samuel (1 and 2). Students learn how the leadership of the Jewish people changed from Judges to Prophets and then to Kings.

Mitzvot

Students learn the deep understandings of the *mitzvot* (commandments) through various religious and non-religious sources including how the *mitzvot* can shape and define our lives.

Book of Samuel

Students learn of the leadership of the Kings of Israel and Judah as well as the history of the Jewish people during this time period.

Elective Classes

Students are able to pursue areas of interest through Judaic elective courses. The options change each year, and the offerings for the 2018-2019 school year include:

- Jews around the World (middle school)
- History of the Jews (middle school)
- *Mussar* (middle school)
- *Parashat HaShavuah* (middle school)
- The Five *Megillot*
- *Tzedek Beit Midrash*
- Love and Relationships

Jews Around the World

Students learn about Jewish communities around the world from both cultural and historical perspectives.

History of the Jews

Students learn selected periods in Jewish history from the time of Abraham through the establishment of the State of Israel.

Mussar

Students examine the way our role models and professionals became who they are today by learning how the masters of discipline taught and enlightened their students over the past 1,000 years to enable them to become successful in all their endeavors.

Parashat HaShavuah

Students learn and integrate into their lessons from the weekly Torah reading with an emphasis on our school's *Divrei Chaim* (Words to Live By).

The Five Megillot

Students learn selections from each of the Five *Megillot* (Lamentations, Song of Songs, Ruth, Esther, Ecclesiastes).

Tzedek Beit Midrash

Students focus on a significant societal issue and do in-class partner learning (*chevruta*) on that topic from both a Judaic and real-world perspective. They create a final project/paper that integrates Judaic learning and real-world perspective.

Love and Relationships

Through Rabbinic teachings students learn how to better understand the concepts and have tools to navigate the world of love and relationships.

Tefilah (Prayer) at Denver JDS

The *tefilah* (prayer) program at Denver JDS provides students with the time to reflect and connect while developing kindness, curiosity, integrity, and purpose. Additional goals of the program include giving space for the students to explore their relationship with God and spirituality, to connect with the community, to gain the skills needed to be a part of a *davening* (prayer) community, and to be knowledgeable about the meaning of the *tefilot* (prayers), and to be exposed to different modalities of *tefilah* (prayer) within the American Jewish community.

Lower Division

Tefilah in the Lower Division takes place in the classrooms on a daily basis. Students in grades kindergarten, first, second, third, and fifth focus on the *shacharit* or morning service while students in the fourth grade focus on the *minchah* or afternoon service. Students also welcome Shabbat on Fridays in their classroom with division-wide Kabbalat Shabbat gatherings which take place once or twice a month.

Upper Division

Tefilah in the Upper Division is called “Zman Kodesh” or holy or separate time and allows for significant choice as students explore different ways to connect to prayer.

Upper Division Tefilah (Zman Kodesh - Holy/Separate Time) Options

- ***Siddur (prayer book)-Based Options***
 - **Essential Prayers:** a “choose your own adventure” service where students are able to focus on specific prayers that speak to them most
 - **Liberal Egalitarian:** a service similar to that found in a Reform temple, with a special twist depending on the interests of the students, involving singing and freedom to deviate from the traditional outline of prayers
 - **Traditional Egalitarian:** a traditional service similar to that found in a Conservative synagogue
 - **Traditional Mechitzah:** a traditional service similar to that found in an Orthodox synagogue
 - **Women’s Minyan:** a women’s only prayer option, guided by the interests of the students
- ***Meaning Personal Meaning Making Options***
 - **Liturgy as Poetry:** This option explores the connection between prayer and poetry and considers how analyzing prayer as poetry can add deeper meaning.
 - **Shabbat Table:** Students become acquainted with traditional Shabbat songs.
 - **Personal Meaning-Making Through Music:** Students listen to favorite songs together and examine how to connect and make personal meaning of the lyrics and melodies.

- **Mindfulness:** Focusing on awareness, breathing, visualization, and being "in the moment," students gain an understanding of how awareness of our daily intentions can transform our mood, productivity, and impact on the world.
- **Agnostics Anonymous (high school only):** This is an open space for students to explore the difficulties of living a Jewish life in the modern world, considering the interactions between religion and science and discussing ethics, humanism, and the history of the search for meaning in life.
- **Hi G-d, It's Me:** Students seek to understand where G-d fits into their lives, improving their experience of prayer.
- **Thoughts and Prayers (high school only):** Students engage in weekly discussions about the role of thoughts and prayers in today's culture and how the ideas of *tzedek* (justice) impact their views on the idea of thoughts and prayers.
- **Literacy Options**
 - **How Humans Pray:** This option examines a different example of prayer from diverse traditions, including ancient and contemporary Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, and indigenous (e.g. Native American) cultures, considering questions like: What is the definition of prayer? How do prayer traditions differ? Are there common themes across prayer traditions? Why do people pray?
 - **Shabbat and Rosh Chodesh:** Students in this section learn the words and tunes to Shabbat and Rosh Chodesh prayers that are sung during special programs and *Shabbatonim* (Shabbat weekends).
 - **Comparative Jewish Liturgy:** Students will examine the differences that appear in key prayers between different Jewish movements (Orthodox, Reform, Reconstructionist, etc.) and different Jewish cultures (Ashkenazi, Sephardic, Yemenite, etc.) as well as the reasons for those differences to gain a better understanding of the underpinnings of each group's form of Judaism.
 - **History of Jewish Prayer:** Students in this option explore the origins of prayer from the Bible through today to gain a better understanding of its role, relevance, and evolution.
 - **Prayer Leadership:** Students in this option learn how to lead a service like a pro.
 - **Prayer 101:** Students look at the liturgy that makes up our prayer services in order to understand the what and why of *davening* (praying).
 - **Symposium on Tefilah:** Students engage in weekly thematic discussions on the structure and customs surrounding Jewish prayer.
 - **Parashat HaShavuah (middle school only):** Students learn about the weekly *parashah* (Torah portion) by watching the Bim Bam (formerly G-dcast) video of the week followed by a discussion.

Mathematics at Denver JDS

The mathematics program at Denver JDS focuses on building the skills of critical thinking and problem solving while engaging the students in the real-world application of learning. The program aims to provide all students with a basic understanding of the way mathematics can describe the physical world around them while encouraging students to appreciate different approaches to solving everyday problems.

Lower Division

In the Lower Division, students are introduced to basic mathematical concepts including addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, and critical thinking using the Math in Focus program as a basis. Our Math in Focus curriculum emphasizes mastery of basic mathematical concepts, number sense, mental math, and problem solving. Students are continually building on prior knowledge as the concepts become increasingly more complex from year to year. There is an emphasis on solving real-world problems using various strategies.

Kindergarten

Kindergarten begins to give students a basis for their mathematical studies. Kindergartners focus on building an understanding of counting with one-to-one correspondence, sorting by attributes, patterning and number recognition to 10 and beyond, developing cardinality, counting strategies and strategies for joining and separating within 10 and to make 10.

First Grade

First grade builds off of kindergarten, continuing with fundamental skills. First grade students begin to engage with abstract mathematical concepts, developing strategies for adding and subtracting whole numbers and exploring measurement using non-standard units for length and weight. Geometry focuses on composition and decomposition of shapes and comparing their attributes.

Second Grade

Mathematics concepts become more complex in second grade. Students can order, group numbers and work with numbers far greater than those they can physically count. They have more practice with skills and concepts introduced in first grade such as skip counting. They learn to add and subtract two-digit numbers and to understand the meaning of multiplication and division. Second graders also focus on building problem-solving skills and strategies; counting, comparing, and writing numbers to 1,000; adding, subtracting, multiplying and dividing using bar models; measuring length, mass, and volume in metric units; telling time; recognizing bills and coins; and classifying lines and surfaces. Second grade math units include "Number Sentences," "Volume" and "Estimation."

Third Grade

Third grade math emphasizes a mastery of basic mathematical concepts, number sense, mental math, and problem solving. Students deepen their understanding of place value to the 10,000s and begin to study the concepts of multiplication, division, measurement, and fractions. Throughout the year, students will develop multiplication and division strategies and relate multiplication to division. By the end of the year, students should recall all products of two one-digit numbers, have the ability to compare, order and make equivalent fractions, and describe and analyze shapes by their sides, angles, and definitions. Key units concepts include fractions, metric measurements, and bar graphs and line plots.

Fourth grade

Fourth graders read, write, compare, add, subtract, multiply, and divide with very large whole numbers. They do equations with fractions and decimals and learn about prime numbers. They solve problems about factors (one of two or more numbers that can be multiplied) and multiples (a number that can be divided exactly by a smaller number) and explore geometry formulas for determining perimeter and area and for measuring angles. Fourth graders figure out conversion problems, such as determining the number of minutes in an hour or ounces in a pound. They not only read graphs, tables, and charts, but they are also able to create them from data they have collected.

Fifth grade

Fifth graders learn to solve complex problems with complex numbers with place value from thousandths to millions. They divide whole numbers, with and without remainders. They make connections between decimals, fractions and percentages and learn to multiply and divide fractions and to do the same operations using the powers of time. They apply these skills to the real world by solving problems about time, measurement, and money. Fifth grade students use a variety of problem-solving strategies to solve increasingly complex word problems.

Upper Division

In the Upper Division, students are required to be enrolled in a mathematics course. Our small class sizes enable us to provide individual attention and ensure each student is appropriately challenged. The department is able to offer various levels including honors and advanced courses. We offer three Advanced Placement(AP) courses: Statistics, AB Calculus, and BC Calculus.

Classes

- Sixth Grade Math
- Pre Algebra/Honors Pre Algebra
- Algebra I/Honors Alg I
- Geometry/Honors Geometry

- Algebra II/Honors Algebra II
- Pre Calculus/Honors Pre Calculus
- Calculus
- AP Calculus AB
- AP Calculus BC
- AP Statistics

Sixth Grade Math

The NCTM (National Council of Teachers of Mathematics) math standards serves as the foundation for instruction in the sixth grade. Students learn operations with decimals, fractions, and integers, factorization, ratios and proportions, percents, graphing on the coordinate plane, working with algebraic expressions and equations, and an introduction to geometry.

Pre Algebra/Honors Pre Algebra

This course serves as an introduction to algebraic concepts and a review of arithmetic algorithms. Students will focus on study skills, number sense, flexibility, and fluency. Topics covered include Expressions, Solving Equations and Inequalities, Decimals, Factors, Fractions, Exponents, Ratios, Linear Functions and Graphing, Data Analysis, Probability, and Geometry.

Algebra I/Honors Algebra I

This course builds on the algebraic concepts that students mastered in pre algebra. Solving multi-step equations and inequalities, solving and graphing linear equations and systems of equations, working with expressions in solving word problems, applying properties of exponents and radicals, multiplying and factoring polynomials, and solving and graphing quadratics.

Geometry/Honors Geometry

Geometry integrates material from both plane and solid geometry. The major emphasis is the study of the properties of the two- and three-dimensional geometric figures. Students learn how to use logic and reasoning (both inductive and deductive) to solve problems. Additional topics include material from analytic geometry, the graphing of functions and relations, geometric constructions, and elementary trigonometry.

Algebra II/Honors Algebra II

Students in Algebra II develop an overall understanding of functions, their properties, and applications. The main focus of the course is the development of the linear, quadratic, radical, polynomial, rational, exponential, and logarithmic functions. Other topics developed include an analysis of both the real and complex number systems, and systems of equations.

Pre Calculus/Honors Pre Calculus

This class prepares students for Calculus and math-based physics. Students study limits, various types of functions, trigonometric identities, and applications of trigonometry. At the end of this course, students are able to use triangles to solve many real-world problems.

AP Calculus AB

Students develop the topics of differential and integral calculus. At the end of the year, students should be able to differentiate and integrate a wide variety of equations with and without technology, as well as understand what a derivative means and the usefulness of them in the real world.

AP Calculus BC

This course is a continuation of AP Calculus AB. Students gain a deeper understanding of integration, as well as a rudimentary understanding of infinite series. Students understand how to apply Calculus to more challenging real-world problems. This course is designed to prepare students for the AP Calculus BC Exam.

AP Statistics

Students are introduced to the major tools for collecting, analyzing, and drawing conclusions from data. Upon completion of this course, students are able to determine if a study is fair, if the conclusion from the study is logical or correct, and conduct their own study. Students are given the skills and knowledge to perform well on the AP Statistics Exam.

Science at Denver JDS

The science program at Denver JDS focuses on building the skills of inquiry, critical thinking, and collaboration while engaging the students in real-world application of learning. The program aims to provide all students with a basic understanding of the way systems work and the different influences which impact that system while encouraging students to make connections between what they are learning and the world around them.

Lower Division

In the Lower Division, using the Full Option Science System (FOSS), students are introduced to concepts including life cycles, earth systems, mechanical and gravitational forces, natural resources and the scientific method. Critical inquiry combined with hands-on project based learning (PBL) encourage students to understand the world around them through a scientific lens. Teachers emphasize authentic problem solving and incorporate learning from guest experts with student research and experimentation. The program develops essential habits of mind by fostering students' ability to ask meaningful questions and seek out thoughtful answers.

Kindergarten

Our kindergarten students focus on units such as "Trees." Through this unit, students learn that trees and leaves have identifiable structures, that trees are resources, have basic needs, and that trees and leaves are identified by their shapes. Other kindergarten units include "Wood and Paper" and "Animals." Students have many opportunities to explore the world around them, partaking in hands-on science instruction.

First Grade

Students in first grade explore the scientific process through units such as "Solids and Liquids," "Pebbles, Sand, and Silt," and "Insects." In each of these units, students learn to find answers to questions about the natural world on their own through observation, description, and hands-on activities.

Second Grade

Second grade science focuses on the scientific process of making observations, precisely describing observations, inferring from observations, asking scientific questions, generating hypotheses, developing strategies to test hypotheses, and reaching conclusions. Over the course of the year, students apply this process in units such as "Balance and Motion" and "Weather" and by investigating the life cycle and needs of plants through hands-on learning in the onsite Wabash Farmette at Denver JDS.

Third Grade

In third grade, science investigations become much more detailed. Students explore more complex natural systems and delve more deeply into their inquiry. They learn about landmasses and bodies of water and how to identify them on a globe or map. They

investigate different states of matter such as solids, liquids, and gases. They are asked to make smart guesses about their observations. Students begin the year with a unit on the “Water Cycle and Water Conservation,” meeting with a representative of the Denver Water Department to discuss our complex water systems and use the onsite Wabash Farmette at Denver JDS as an outdoor classroom to study water in a hands-on manner. Students also study the Earth’s materials, including rocks and minerals, culminating the unit with a visit to Roxborough State Park. The students also get a chance to sleep at the zoo or aquarium and witness all the animals in their habitats.

Fourth Grade

Fourth graders begin to compare complex systems in a complex manner. Students focus on the scientific process of making observations, precisely describing observations, inferring from observations, asking scientific questions, generating hypotheses, developing strategies to test hypotheses, and reaching conclusions. Over the course of the year, this process is applied in several units, including those on the “Sun, Moon and Stars” and “Magnetism and Electricity.” A highlight of the year is the project based learning unit focusing on nutrition and exercise through which students create their own exercise videos.

Fifth Grade

Fifth grade scientists exhibit greater independence through in-depth explorations of physical, earth and life sciences. Each unit incorporates hands-on field work and visits with relevant experts. Students explore living systems through the lens of the ecology and adaptations of Colorado endangered species. They create scientifically illustrated species cards including the characteristics and adaptations of a specific species. Students learn about weather systems and plate tectonics by investigating natural disasters. They write a research paper on a specific natural disaster and use their learning to inform the Structure Build (students work in teams to plan, craft, and test disaster-proof buildings built from cardboard and other simple materials). Students study energy and natural resources by answering the driving question “How and why should we use energy resources wisely?” They learn about types and properties of energy, what electricity is and how it can be generated and the different sources of fuel available to us. Fifth grade students also work with the building blocks of chemistry. They determine how to separate particles of different sizes and properties from mixtures and solutions and learn about saturation and the properties of molecules.

Upper Division

In the Upper Division, coursework is divided into required components that set the foundation and introduce the concepts of science. Students learn to collect, analyze, and apply data to understand key scientific principles in a variety of disciplines. For example, students gain exposure to scientific methods and concepts in earth sciences, biology, chemistry, and physics with the opportunity to study topics of specific interest at an advanced level. Students

investigate science through developing and carrying out original Eureka Week research and experiments, traditional laboratory work, and project based exploration. Problem solving strategies are modeled by teachers, and students are encouraged to share their strategies and extend their critical thinking skills. Armed with core scientific knowledge and analytical tools, our students are empowered to be lifelong learners.

Required Classes

- Sixth Grade Science
- Seventh Grade Science
- Eighth Grade Science
- Biology
- Chemistry
- Math-Based Physics (alternatively, students may fulfill requirement through electives)

Elective Classes

- Physics of Sports
- Physics of Air and Water
- Physics of Astronomy
- Physics of Sight and Sound
- Forensics
- Honors General Chemistry II
- Honors Biochemistry of Proteins
- Anatomy and Physiology
- Advanced Genetics

Middle School

The middle school science curriculum focuses on scientific methods, processes, and skills while students attain basic content in the earth, physical, and life sciences. Students design and carry out original research for Eureka Week (science fair) exhibitions twice a year, with the opportunity to expand that research into a project for competition in the Cardel Homes Denver Regional Science Fair.

Sixth Grade

Sixth grade curricular topics center on the earth sciences emphasizing relationships between phenomena. Specific units of study include plate tectonics, oceanography, and weather. Unifying themes include the nature of cycles, currents as a means of moving matter, and the importance of density in the movement of fluids.

Seventh Grade

The seventh grade focus is on applying scientific methods and understandings to things that cannot be observed directly. Beginning with the study of rocks and

minerals, direct observation is used to make inferences about their formation. During the study of chemistry those inferential skills are applied to the study of atoms, molecules and subatomic structure. Through the study of astronomy, students learn how these same skills can be used to study the universe.

Eighth Grade

Eighth grade students begin to use more quantitative data and mathematical analysis as they study forces and motion in the physical science. The knowledge of force and simple machines is integrated with the study of the muscular and skeletal systems, and the sensory systems are explored as means of gathering information about our environment.

High School

The high school curriculum supports the three-year science graduation requirement by offering year-long college preparatory courses in biology, chemistry, and mathematics-based physics. In addition, we offer semester long elective courses to allow students to explore topics not covered in those introductory courses, to integrate with the Tzedek track or to delve into topics at a college level.

Biology

Biology is a one-year introductory course required for graduation. Topics include the structure and function of the cell, photosynthesis and respiration, mitosis, meiosis, genetics and a survey of the animal kingdom.

Chemistry

Chemistry is a one-year survey course required for graduation. Topics include the atomic model, chemical reactions and equations, stoichiometry, solution chemistry, gas behavior, equilibrium and acid-base chemistry.

Math-Based Physics

Kinematics and Dynamics: This one year course uses a mathematical approach, and is trigonometry based. Students must have completed or be concurrently enrolled in pre-calculus. Topics studied include kinematics, wave phenomena, electromagnetic phenomena, and an introduction to modern physics. This is a one-year course which satisfies the graduation requirement for physics.

Physics of Light and Sound: This course investigates wave motion, sound, sonar, echoes, resonance, music, color, lenses, mirrors, and sight and hearing. This one semester course counts toward the one-year physics requirement for graduation.

Astronomy: This course is the study of the universe with an emphasis on what data is received and how it is interpreted leading to accepted understandings and new mysteries. Students work with celestial spheres, reflecting and refracting telescopes and spectrosopes to gather their own data. Topics studied include motion of planets, stars and moons, stellar evolution, dark matter and dark energy.

Physics of Sports: This course studies the science of force and motion as it applies to sports; this one-semester course counts toward the one-year physics requirement for graduation.

Physics of Air and Water: This one-semester course explores these movements in the atmosphere and hydrosphere. Additional explorations include the physics of flight and boating. This course counts toward the one-year physics requirement for graduation.

Forensic Science

In this one-semester course students will use skills and knowledge gained in biology and chemistry and apply it to forensics – the application of science to law. Topics studied will include crime scene analysis, physical evidence, microscopy, trace evidence, and fingerprinting. Case studies and laboratory work will make up a significant part of the class work. Biology and chemistry prerequisite.

Honors General Chemistry

This one-semester course will review the concepts learned in chemistry and expand on them in the study of oxidation-reduction reactions, electrochemistry and thermochemistry. Significant independent problem solving will be required for this honors course. Successful completion of chemistry is a prerequisite.

Honors Biochemistry of Proteins

This one-semester course will focus on the structure and function of proteins. Topics studied will include the bonding of carbon and other non-metals, non-bonding interactions along the protein chain, enzyme actions, and the disorders that result when these structures and functions are lacking.

Honors Electricity and Electrochemistry

This one-semester course will examine the nature and applications of electricity. Topics include electric charge, field and potential, currents, circuits, oxidation-reduction reactions, batteries, corrosion and electroplating.

Honors Psychology

Honors Psychology is a year-long science elective. Students are introduced to the field of psychology as an empirical science. Topics span from history of psychology to biopsychology, sensation, perception, development, cognition, abnormal as well as social psychology. This fast-paced course includes project based learning, group work, independent study, and self-discovery.

Advanced Genetics

This class explores genetics from simple dominant/recessive inheritance to more complicated patterns of inheritance like epistasis, multiple alleles, and polygenic traits. Traits are studied over multiple generations through experimentation and critical analysis of current research.

Intro to Computer Science

This one-semester course teaches the foundations of computer science and basic programming, with an emphasis on helping students develop logical thinking and problem-solving skills. Upon completion, students will have learned material equivalent to a semester college introductory course in Computer Science and be able to program in JavaScript. The entirely web-based curriculum is made up of a series of learning modules that cover the fundamentals of programming. Each module is made up of short video tutorials, example programs, quizzes, programming exercises, challenge problems, and unit tests.

AP Computer Science Principles

This course introduces students to the foundational concepts of computer science and explores the impact computing and technology have on our society. With a unique focus on creative problem solving and real-world applications, this course gives students the opportunity to explore several important topics of computing using their own ideas and creativity, using the power of computing to create artifacts of personal value, and developing an interest in computer science that will foster further endeavors in the field. The entirely web-based curriculum is made up of a series of learning modules that cover the fundamentals of programming. Each module is made up of short video tutorials, example programs, quizzes, programming exercises, challenge problems, and unit tests. Students write and run JavaScript programs in the browser, create websites using HTML and CSS, and digital presentations, and engage in in-person collaborative exercises with classmates.

Social Studies at Denver JDS

The social studies program at Denver JDS orients students in the larger world by providing them with both a historical and modern context of their place in the world. This contextualization is done through the study of geography, history, and sociology, and is taught while emphasizing the important life skills of critical thinking, writing, and public speaking.

Lower Division

In the Lower Division, students in kindergarten through second grade are introduced to the concepts of community (from classroom to neighborhood to city), holidays and traditions, geography, American symbols, and comparing life in the past to present day life. Grades three through five address U.S. state regions, geography, Colorado history, U.S. history, economic concepts and local, state and federal government structures. This is done through an integrated curriculum. Students engage in their study through hands-on activities, reading, and technology. This allows for their own inquiry to drive the learning process. Teachers use experts from the field to bring life to material in class, and the program sets the foundation for success in future studies. Students also participate in field trips to learn through experience and exploration.

Kindergarten

In kindergarten, through an integrated dual curriculum of social and Judaic studies, students learn about the rules that help people get along with each other, develop their critical-thinking skills, and begin to form opinions on issues and understand that others may have different points of view. With a heavy focus on Jewish traditions and values, or *middot*, students learn to be respectful, secure, and responsible community members who appreciate and understand their own special and unique qualities. Through field trips, interactive lessons, performances and projects, kindergarten students study and create lasting connections to the world. Kindergarten social studies units include “Maps and Globes” and “Careers and Economics.”

First Grade

In first grade, the concrete world of family, school, and neighborhood frames social studies, which focuses on patterns and chronological order of events of the recent past, as well as American symbols, civics, and familial and cultural traditions of the U.S. Fully integrated with Jewish values, our conflict management program, *Kelso's Choices*, models appropriate problem solving strategies to promote healthy interactions with peers.

Second Grade

In second grade, students broaden their knowledge of the world. Second graders learn about the people and places of their local communities and regions and compare them to other communities and regions. They may be given more responsibility to resolve conflicts with their classmates and are expected to have a deeper understanding of the importance of rules and their role in helping people get along. Our goal is to give

students the tools they need to be upstanding members of their *kehillah* (community), ask questions, and participate in their communities to help make our world a better place for all people. Our curriculum looks at the different ways that people interact and live as good citizens. We integrate values that are part of our grade *middot* (values) curriculum whenever possible and focus on four main areas of study: history, geography, economics, and civics. Second grade units include “Community,” “Elections,” and “Location, Location, Location.”

Third Grade

Third grade social studies focuses on civics, history, geography, and community building, incorporating a study of democracy in general and the United States Constitution, Bill of Rights, and the three branches of the government specifically. Third graders explore their place in the world through their study of civics, our *middot* (values), and geography. Through geography, students focus on developing spatial thinking and investigating types of geographic tools, learning about various features of a map and conducting research on regions and states within our country. Key units include “What is Democracy?,” “Our Role in Society,” and “Economics.”

Fourth Grade

Fourth grade social studies moves from learning about our local community to focusing on the history of Colorado. Students learn about the first people to live in the area, explore changes in state populations over time, and examine how different people and cultures have adapted to and influenced the state. They learn to place major events in the state’s history in chronological order and focus on local and state government structure. Students learn about the government offices responsible for making, enforcing, and interpreting state laws. Fourth graders explore the cultures of early Pueblo people in the Southwest and the Native Americans of the plains through historical fiction, non-fiction and various activities to learn more about the different cultures. They also gain an understanding of how geography uses coordinates of latitude and longitude to locate continents and countries around the world. The fourth grade overnight is also connected to social studies, giving students an opportunity to explore their connections to Colorado.

Fifth Grade

Fifth graders engage in several project based learning units over the course of the year, encouraging their own inquiry and voice in the process. The driving force of fifth grade social studies is questions that inspire students to think deeply about the content they are studying. They kindle an exploration of the American Revolution by being asked “What are you willing to die for?” and continue to be engaged in in-depth exploration of the topics.

Upper Division

The social studies curriculum in the Upper Division is intentionally designed with a number of pluralistic objectives in mind, including to develop knowledge and skills in order to make sound judgements, to understand historical and contemporary experiences and events, and to analyze interpersonal, local, national and global tensions in order to participate fully in our increasingly interdependent and complex world through the use of reasoning and reflective thinking. The core program includes history, geography, civics and economics.

Required Classes

- Sixth Grade Social Studies
- Seventh Grade Social Studies
- Eighth Grade Social Studies
- World History
- AP U.S. History/CP U.S. History

Elective Classes

- AP European History/CP European History
- AP Economics
- Theories of Justice

Sixth Grade Social Studies

Sixth Grade Social Studies focuses on the geographies, economies, politics, and histories of the Western Hemisphere (the Americas). Students virtually “visit” a variety of places across the Americas, immersing themselves in the distinctive cultures, stories, politics, and economic conditions of each place. Students enlarge their vocabularies for talking about different cultures and their knowledge about people living in both the past and the present. Students also gain significant practice in extracting meaning from sources and sharing what they’ve learned. There is some emphasis on the pre-colonial history of American peoples.

Seventh Grade Social Studies

Seventh Grade Social Studies is an in-depth study of the major countries of the Eastern Hemisphere. Students focus on reading comprehension, note-taking, research, analytical writing, and public speaking, and answer questions such as “what makes a nation” and “how are religion and culture connected.”

Eighth Grade Social Studies

Eighth Grade Social Studies is a survey study of American history from the Pre-Columbian period through the 1960s. Students gain skill in reading comprehension, vocabulary, map and chart reading, and synthesizing information.

World History

World History is an exploration of the human experience across time, from the lives of our prehistoric ancestors to the way we live today. Students learn the major “stories” that comprise human history, while developing their capacity to read, write, converse, and think critically about those stories. There is an emphasis on the process of asking questions that explore the thinking, motivations, and experiences of people in the past and constructing answers to those questions based on analysis of primary and secondary sources. Students receive extensive support to improve their reading comprehension and the quality of their written communication.

AP U.S. History: Designed to be the equivalent of a two-semester introductory college or university U.S. history course. In AP U.S. History students investigate significant events, individuals, developments, and processes in nine historical periods from approximately 1491 to the present. Students develop and use the same skills, practices, and methods employed by historians: analyzing primary and secondary sources; making historical comparisons; utilizing reasoning about contextualization, causation, and continuity and change over time; and developing historical arguments. The course also provides seven themes that students explore throughout the course in order to make connections among historical developments in different times and places: American and national identity; migration and settlement; politics and power; work, exchange, and technology; America in the world; geography and the environment; and culture and society.

CP U.S. History: This course provides a one-year survey of American history from the Colonial Period and the American Revolution to the present day, with an emphasis on the 20th century. Using the textbook and primary documents and current events, students learn about the various political, social, religious, and economic developments that have shaped and continue to shape the United States. Essay writing and critical thinking are emphasized as integral ways of understanding how the past relates to the present and future.

AP European History: This is a college-level survey of developments in Europe from the Renaissance to the present. Students learn the major “stories” that comprise modern European history, while developing their capacity to read, write, converse, and think critically about those stories. There is an emphasis on the process of asking questions that explore the thinking, motivations, and experiences of people in the past and constructing answers to those questions based on analysis of primary and secondary sources.

CP European History: This is a study of European history from the 1300s to the creation of the European Union. Students explore the Renaissance, the Reformation, European exploration and competing claims in North and South America, absolute monarchies, the

Enlightenment, the Scientific Revolution, the French Revolution, the Romantic Movement, the Industrial Revolution, European imperialism in Africa, Asia, and the Middle East, World War I, the Russian Revolution, World War II, the Cold War, and the European Union.

AP Economics

In AP Macro Economics, students learn about basic economic concepts, supply and demand, measurement of economic performance, national income and price determination, the financial sector, inflation, unemployment and stabilization policies, economic growth and productivity, the open economy: international trade and finance, and economic studies of other nations. Students draw economic policy inferences and recognize the potential constraints in their implementation. They also marshal evidence to assimilate, structure, and analyze qualitative and quantitative data.

Theories of Justice

This course explores critical analysis of classical and contemporary theories of justice, including discussion of present-day applications. Topics include affirmative action, income distribution, same-sex marriage, the role of markets, debates about rights (human rights and property rights), arguments for and against equality, and dilemmas of loyalty in public and private life. The course invites learners to subject their own views on these controversies to critical examination. The principal readings for the course are texts by Aristotle, John Locke, Immanuel Kant, John Stuart Mill, and John Rawls.

Specials, Electives, and Other Programmatic Aspects at Denver JDS

Understanding that each of our students is unique, and that each student requires different conditions and opportunities for optimal learning, Denver JDS offers a robust program, offering specials and electives, differentiating intelligence into different modalities rather than focusing on one ability. Providing students with a variety of opportunities promotes brain development and student growth, and, optimally, empowers students to engage in different “intelligences” throughout their learning in order to best process information and grow as learners.

Art

The art program at Denver JDS focuses on the principles of art and standard-based instruction to present a cohesive instruction model tiered to address grade-specific needs. Students experience multiple mediums and a hands-on approach designed to build artistic and cognitive skills.

Lower Division

In the Lower Division, students explore the visual arts by learning about contemporary and historical artists/art practices with a focus on Jewish artists. They learn by seeing, reading, practicing, creating, and, afterward, reflecting on their experiences with their artwork. Students experience many different ideas, media, and processes on their way to creating artwork and learning about art. They work individually and collaboratively every day to create something new.

Upper Division

In the middle school in the Upper Division, grades six through eight, students participate in a visual arts program with learning focused on the principles of art language, art history and movements, technical skill development, and experimentation with a variety of media. Students participate in a wide range of hands-on projects designed to reinforce these principles. Working individually and collaboratively, students engage in an environment that supports critical thinking, imagination, and artistic behavior.

Athletics

The Upper Division athletics program at Denver JDS focuses on building teamwork, sportsmanship, and commitment through healthy competition. The program aims to provide all student participants with a basic understanding of how to play basketball, baseball, soccer, and volleyball. In the Upper Division, all students can choose to participate in one or all of our team sport options. Inclusion is an important value at Denver JDS. Consequently, we have a “no cut” policy for all Denver JDS Upper Division sports teams to assure that all students can choose to participate in one or all of our team sport options. Students are placed on teams according to ability levels. Further, students participate on athletic team sports regardless of financial need. These policies contribute to high overall participation rates of over 70% in athletics every year.

Creation Spaces (Makerspaces)

Called a *merchav yetzirah* in Hebrew, a creation space is a dedicated space to build, design, and make, fostering creativity, innovation, empathy, and problem-solving skills amongst our students. The space encourages them to take the content they are learning in other classes and the outside world and create something meaningful, while also providing a variety of different opportunities, allowing students with different interests and different abilities to get involved. Our creation spaces are inspired by Israeli innovation and a commitment to making the world a better place, fostering students' curiosity, kindness, integrity, sense of purpose, and impact on the community. These spaces help to cultivate a sense of Jewish identity by recognizing that creation is a Godly attribute, and by being creators ourselves, we are truly "in God's image."

Options Courses

In our Upper Division (grades 9-12), students are able to pursue areas of interest through our Options courses. The options change each year. The offerings for the 2018-19 school year include:

Options Classes

- Speech & Debate
- Speech & Debate II
- Medical Ethics
- Entrepreneurship
- Ethics of Extinction
- World Religions
- Creative Writing
- History Through Literature

Experiential Education

Hands-on, personal learning experiences that purposefully engage students in direct experience help students to increase knowledge, develop skills, and clarify values, all taking their learning to a deeper level. At Denver JDS, every grade (K-12) incorporates field work, hands-on learning, and other experiential opportunities into the curriculum.

Lower Division

In the Lower Division, we recognize that elementary school students learn by doing, and, therefore, we incorporate experiential education into almost every area of instruction. Different grades and subject areas have a multiplicity of ways to accomplish this, from kindergarteners' visiting Home Depot to find materials to build a model *mishkan*

(tabernacle) for Judaic Studies to second graders' exploring the houses of Molly Brown and Golda Meir to learn more about bravery for *Zman Cheker* (In-Depth Inquiry Time) to fifth graders' researching, drafting scale plans for, and building hurricane-resistant structures. We make a concerted effort to focus on real-world problems in the classroom and to offer students opportunities to explore possible solutions for themselves.

Upper Division

In the Upper Division, the experiential education program focuses mainly on class trips and other school-wide programs such as Color War (a unique student-led, cross-grade, week-long, theme-based competition), *Shabbatonim* (weekend retreats), the Senior Development Program and holiday celebrations. These elements build community and infuse a sense of spirit into our students while also bringing the learning outside of the classroom. Additionally, our science classes rely heavily on experiential educational elements including traditional laboratory activities and projects.

Future-Ready Skills

Denver JDS focuses on fostering within our students the skills necessary to thrive in today's (and tomorrow's) world. These skills include communication, collaboration, creativity, and critical thinking and are infused throughout all of our classes. Special programs such as Color War (a unique student-led, cross-grade, week-long, theme-based competition), Field Day, and field work provide added opportunities for students to hone these skills.

Interdisciplinary Learning

Denver JDS believes in maximizing student learning and providing authentic, engaging learning environments. As such, much of the student learning happens in an interdisciplinary format, providing students a space and opportunity to apply learning from one discipline to another discipline, making it their own, and mimicking the real world.

Library

The Lower Division library program at Denver JDS focuses on building foundational skills in reading, information literacy, and research skills as well as a love of literature. The program aims to provide all students with a basic understanding of how to locate, use, and share information while encouraging students to become curious learners and creators of new knowledge. In the Lower Division, students are introduced to basic library skills like cataloging, book production, checkout procedures, and online resources. Students are exposed to a wide variety of texts in both fiction and nonfiction that cover many diverse perspectives. Students engage in their study through hands-on activities and project based learning that allows for their own inquiry to drive the learning process.

Music

The Lower Division music program at Denver JDS gives students in grades kindergarten through five the opportunity to develop the musical skills of performing, listening and analyzing, and creating. Students learn to read music, play the recorder and guitar, and perform in front of an audience. Students learn the structure of music through the study of basic musical concepts, such as pitch, rhythm, dynamics, form, and timbre. Students are exposed to musical literature, historical context, cultural diversity, and exercises in creativity.

Physical Education

The physical education program at Denver JDS is based on the National Association of Physical Literacy standards and focuses on improving the lives of every student by guiding them toward a fit-for-life lifestyle. We do this by incorporating a variety of skills, concepts and principles into each new lesson and unit we teach. Lessons are tailored to meet the needs of all students as we believe all students should be actively involved in their learning process. We believe our students create their own success by learning the skills individually and then applying them while working with partners or in groups to achieve success in the game or sport. From kindergarten through 10th grade, students learn a variety of movement concepts as well as manipulative and locomotor skills that will eventually lead to their involvement in fitness or sports throughout a lifetime. Our main goal in physical education program is to create lifelong advocates of physical activity, fitness, and movement that will lead to a healthy life.

Lower Division

In the Lower Division, students focus on leading healthy and physically fit and active lifestyles. Two major focuses of the physical education program are fitness and skill development. Learning how to work together as peer coaches, providing feedback to each other, and being able to demonstrate and explain the given skill are all important areas of growth for the students as they journey from grades kindergarten through five. Through 21st century learning and project based learning, the students are best able to demonstrate their learning over the course of the year.

Upper Division

In the Upper Division, sixth through ninth grade student learning is centered on personal fitness, individual pursuits, and team sports. The overarching goal is to create empowered students who will make healthy choices for life which is done by educating students on and exposing students to a variety healthy lifelong pursuits. In addition to team and individual sports, every week a portion of the classes incorporates personal cardio fitness and strength training.

Service Learning

The service learning program at Denver JDS focuses on performing acts of loving kindness (*gemilut chasadim*), doing good deeds (*mitzvot*), philanthropic giving (*tzedakah*), and working to repair the world (*tikkun olam*), which are all integral parts of the daily teachings at Denver JDS. Through the Lower Division Helping Hands program and the Upper Division *Tzedek* program, students embrace these *middot* (Jewish values), both in the classroom and in their daily lives. In addition to community service by grade, social responsibility is promoted through school-sponsored community service projects, and students are encouraged to participate and take on leadership roles in activities sponsored by the larger Jewish community.

Lower Division

In collaboration with parent volunteers, Denver JDS faculty work by grade level to exemplify the importance of service learning through our Helping Hands program. In kindergarten through fifth grade, each grade has a local non-profit organization upon which to focus their learning and support. Throughout the school year, each grade raises funds for their Helping Hands agency, and students have the chance to volunteer for the organization.

Upper Division

The goals of the *Tzedek* program at Denver JDS include instilling in students an obligation to support the community and to make a difference while inspiring and empowering them to do so. Additionally, the *Tzedek* program fosters a sense of *tzedek* being deeply rooted in Jewish values and history, with our students being a part of that tradition. Students learn about issues of justice, the environment, equality, and diversity. The *Tzedek* track gives students hands-on experience in changing their community and their world through action and volunteerism (*gemilut chasadim*), righteous generosity (*tzedakah*), and advocacy (*tzedek*). The middle school *Tzedek* program includes a mandatory class for seventh grade students that focuses on this material. The high school *Tzedek* program involves an optional track of interdisciplinary coursework for students. The track culminates with recognition of its completion upon graduating from Denver JDS.

Spanish

Beginning in ninth grade Spanish is taught as a second foreign language option for students. As an option rather than a core class, Spanish meets three times per week. Consequently, students complete half of a year of high school Spanish per school year. By the end of the four-year sequence students complete the equivalent of a typical high school Spanish II curriculum. We utilize the standards for foreign language learning based on five goals for Foreign Language Learning.

Technology

The technology program at Denver JDS aims to provide all students with an understanding of the way technology systems work while encouraging students to make connections between what they are learning in other classrooms and how technology plays a role in learning and life. Through separate and integrated technology instruction, students learn to incorporate the future-ready skills of communication, collaboration, creativity, and critical thinking into their use of technology. The technology systems at Denver JDS are regularly updated to provide strong and consistent connectivity for all students and teachers, strong security system protocols and a strong support system with responsive and timely follow up to needs.

Lower Division

In the Lower Division, students are introduced to basic technology concepts through an integrated curriculum. Students visit the computer lab weekly for computer and technology classes and use technology to enhance their day-to-day learning. Students engage in their study of technology through hands-on activities and project based learning that allows for their own inquiry to drive the learning process. The technology teacher collaborates with classroom teachers to create meaningful learning experiences for students that foster an integrated environment and teach students safe and responsible usage of computers and internet use as well as research skills, coding, design thinking and problem solving, responsibility and critical thinking. Teachers use iPads, SMART Boards, projectors, Chromebooks, computers, and educational software to set the foundation for success in future studies. Students in kindergarten through fifth grade have a 1:2 ratio of devices to students (Chromebooks and iPads) in all classrooms.

Upper Division

In the Upper Division, students learn how to integrate technology in all of their subjects. By having a 1:1 device program in our division, students learn to use their laptops as technological support tools in all manner of learning, allowing for a broader and deeper understanding of the applications they will need to as technologically adept citizens, workers, and contributors in the 21st century.

Student Support

Denver JDS takes a whole child approach to education and is committed to the growth of each of our students, academically, personally, and social-emotionally.

Counseling

The primary function of the counseling department is to provide and oversee psychological and social-emotional support for all students to help them achieve their educational goals. All students have contact with the counseling department throughout the year in the form of classroom interventions and presentations, with topics ranging from mindfulness, personal space and friendship in the Lower Division to stress management, consent, and media literacy in the Upper Division. Additional services offered to all students include a drop-in Lunch Bunch group where students can provide and receive friendship advice.

The counseling department also oversees the health curriculum. This ranges from a week-long puberty curriculum in fifth grade to reproduction and changing bodies and relationships in middle school to teaching a weekly health class in ninth grade, which includes nutrition, mental health, drugs and alcohol, and sexuality. The Healthy Educational Leadership Program (HELP) Committee is a group of high school students, facilitated by the school counselor, that creates programming covering a range of topics including social and mental health issues for the Upper Division.

Furthermore, the counseling department provides formal small group facilitation as needed for Lower Division students who require additional support in social skills and maintains current knowledge of community resources and relationships with outside providers.

Advisory

All sixth through ninth graders participate in a weekly health and life skills class called MenschSkills. MenschSkills means learning about all the things that go into being a person of integrity, an upstander, and a person who acts ethically and respectfully in the world.

In this class, students are guided in learning steps for decision-making that enable them to make choices in alignment with their values, their Judaism, and that prioritize their physical health, mental health, and relationships. Students engage in developmentally appropriate, evidence-based lessons that are solidly rooted in the research literature. The classroom is a place where students are encouraged to ask questions, minimize shame and judgment, and actively demonstrate respect and acceptance of all people.

The program consists of four main units: nutrition and physical health, mental health, substance use, and sexuality. These topics are engaging for students yet may also bring up some discomfort. We believe that there is value and growth in experiencing discomfort, and we encourage students to share their experiences and feelings. Students will complete a journal

entry every week as a reflection of the content they are learning in class, and these journals will also have a component of parent involvement.

College Counseling

The college counseling program is designed to guide students through the college admissions process which includes standardized testing, the college search, the application process, and college decisions. Denver JDS's college counselor works with students and families to determine a good academic, social, and financial match between the college and the student.

The college counselor first meets with students early in ninth grade to talk about high school grades and the Denver JDS transcript as well as the college counseling program. This initial meeting is followed by another one in 10th grade to discuss the PSAT, optional PreACT, and appropriate planning. A college information night is held each spring for parents and students in 10th and 11th grades as an overview to the college admissions and financial aid processes.

College counseling begins formally in 11th grade when students meet regularly as a group with the counselor to address and discuss primary topics in the college application process including standardized testing, choosing a college, the Common Application, essay writing, scholarships, and college visits. During junior year, the counselor meets individually with each student and then with each student and his/her parent(s) to develop a personal list of colleges, address questions, and guide the process.

In 12th grade, the counselor continues to work individually with each student and his/her family to support and monitor the application process. The counselor is available to facilitate the early decision/early action/regular decision conversation, edit applications and essays, monitor deadlines, and encourage communication with admission representatives. For each application the counselor submits a personalized counselor recommendation and a school report which includes senior courses in progress, official transcript, and school profile.

Role of Assessment and Differentiation

Denver JDS uses a *Body of Evidence* approach to assessment. All student assessment is meant to inform and guide instruction and help us to better understand our students as learners. We use a variety of assessment measures to monitor student growth throughout the year(s) including both curricular assessments and national assessments.

These different assessments are used to group students by readiness and provide appropriate differentiation within the classroom. Our teachers work to differentiate for students on the basis of readiness and interest for content, process, and product in order to ensure that all students are being challenged at an appropriate level in order to achieve maximum growth.

Gifted Learner Program

The Lower Division Gifted Learner Program recognizes those students in our school who possess exceptional creativity of thought and reasoning, cognitive abilities or intellectual strengths. These gifted students require additional programming and services that are substantively and qualitatively appropriate to ensure that they are challenged to expand their knowledge and cognitive potential. To meet the needs of these students, a partnership of the overarching school community, the teachers, the parents, and the student is essential. Additionally, recognizing and supporting the unique social-emotional needs of gifted students is vital for them to thrive in and out of the classroom.

To identify the diversity of gifted learners in our student population we look at a body of evidence when determining if a student would benefit from gifted programming. Identification takes into account both the academic and social-emotional components of giftedness. Due to an overall high ability and high achieving student population, this program identifies highly gifted students for participation. Some of the measures used to assess giftedness in our students include: CogAT, MAP, K-BIT2, teacher and parent surveys.

Learning Resources

The Learning Resource Center (LRC) at Denver JDS focuses on the inclusion of students with mild to moderate disabilities through the provision of remediation and support. The program aims to provide support for students and teachers to help create an environment where all individuals feel successful. Learning specialists coach and collaborate with faculty to implement appropriate strategies, accommodations and modifications.

Lower Division

In the Lower Division, students are supported through classroom push-in and pull-out support. Students engage in small group systematic literacy instruction with frequent progress monitoring of academic progress. Teachers collaborate to adapt, modify and scaffold class assignments and information. The LRC partners with parents and encourages frequent communication.

Upper Division

In the Upper Division, students are supported through classroom push in and pull out support. Students meet with the LRC to learn the skills necessary to be a successful student at Denver JDS, but also to be successful in future academics. Students learn organization, reading and writing skills in addition to interacting with peers and faculty in an appropriate manner. It is the goal of the LRC to work with teachers and parents to ensure that each student is successful.