Mead School Curriculum

Learning That Lasts

The Mead School

PRE-KINDERGARTEN - GRADE 8

THE MEAD SCHOOL APPROACH

At Mead, we believe that social and emotional development are as vital to children's future success as their academic pursuits. Our commitment to teaching, challenging and nurturing the whole child is realized throughout our two-teacher approach:

- Each class has a Home Center that is led by a **Home Center Director** (HCD) — a teacher who is dedicated to the academic, emotional and social development of each child. The role of the HCD is to continually assess each student's physical, social and emotional well-being and to guide students through challenges and opportunities as they arise.

- The HCD serves as the common thread to the students and gives support and guidance as needed. HCDs connect with students on a personal level, cultivating open conversations and building trusting relationships. HCDs serve as the bridge between students, parents, and others in the educational process, ensuring that children's specific needs are addressed.

- **Curriculum Directors** (CD) are teachers dedicated to instruction in all content areas. CDs take an innovative, personalized approach to teaching. They design their curriculum to engage students on a more meaningful level by presenting the material in fresh and interesting ways. Mead students don't simply learn facts and figures, they are challenged to think deeply about a subject and understand it from many different perspectives. The result is motivated students who love to learn.

The Mead School
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

PRE-KINDERGARTEN

OVERVIEW

The main goal for the curriculum for our Pre-Kindergarten students is to provide a wide and stimulating range of hands-on, enjoyable learning experiences through play.

LANGUAGE ARTS

With guidance and support, our Mead's Pre-Kindergarten students begin understanding phonics, recognize and produce rhyming words, ask questions about words in stories, act out characters, make predictions and make connections between themselves, a story, song or poem. Using the *Handwriting Without Tears* curriculum, they use a combination of dictating and drawing to create original stories or retell favorites in their own words. Pre-Kindergarten students become active listeners and participants in their own learning.

MATHEMATICS

Pre-Kindergarten students begin to create a relationship with numbers, through activities that expose them to counting, shapes, sorting, measurement, relative positions of objects and space, three-dimensional shapes, coins and money, to name a few.

- Number Sense and Operations;
- Patterns and Algebraic Reasoning;
- Geometry; and
- Measurement.

SCIENCE

With prompting, support, trial and error, Pre-Kindergarten students purposefully experiment with moving objects, examining objects using their five senses to discover their properties, experiment with and make changes to physical objects to understand how water, air, heat, shape, size and color react with them. They explore the environment, changing seasons, gravity, porosity, plants, animal habitats and the conditions in which living things best grow and thrive.

ESPAÑOL

Pre-Kindergarten students learn about Spanish culture, customs, holidays and language through games, songs and interactive lessons designed to make learning Spanish fun.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

The Pre-Kindergarten Physical Development curriculum explores both fine and gross motor skills as well as locomotor skills and balance. Hand-eye coordination, and body and space awareness will be taught in both large areas of play and sometimes smaller classrooms. Instructional and direction-driven games will be conducted. Many of the activities will stem around “imaginative play” where an obstacle course is a “walk in the jungle” or practicing an overhand throw with a small ball is “ throwing snowballs and knocking down the icicles”. The emphasis of fun while learning is key.

MUSIC

Pre-Kindergarten students find the music inside them and their own way of expressing that musicality. The teacher exposes students to many different genres of music and modes of expression. Students learn two overarching skills: singing in tune and keeping a steady beat. They practice these skills by playing solo singing games and rhythm games. They learn songs from a variety of musical traditions, as well as hand movements that go along with the songs. During guided “explore time,” students play various instruments, and the teacher observes, encourages, and makes suggestions. Students are introduced to songwriting by taking songs they already know and creating new lyrics.

ART

In Pre-Kindergarten, Art is an integral part of most any curriculum throughout the day, to stimulate creative expression, color, shape and texture sense, and experience art through each of the five senses.

DRAMA

The Pre-Kindergarten Drama curriculum guides students to explore their imaginations and interact with each other on stage. Students will play theatre games which helps build connections, freedom of physicality and listening skills. Each week the students will be either reading a new book and acting it out or bringing a story that they have created in their center and acting it out in the Black Box Theatre. We explore how stories have a beginning, middle and end, as well as a conflict and resolution. The students have the opportunity to wear costumes and create their environments for their stories.

KINDERGARTEN

OVERVIEW

In Kindergarten, we meet students where they are in their own personal academic, social and emotional growth. Our overarching goal is to build their independent skills while also nurturing a curiosity and appreciation of learning within the classroom community.

For Kindergartners, it is important to learn how to be in school, how to follow a schedule, “show up” for a teacher-directed experience, and participate with and support their fellow students. Teachers capitalize on students’ innate curiosity & creativity, build stamina, cultivate problem-solving, and develop each students’ skills navigating as a peer and in the community.

LANGUAGE ARTS

Kindergarten Language Arts focuses on the four domains of reading, writing, speaking and listening. Kindergarten students work in whole groups, small groups and one-on-one in a balanced literacy program, including: read alouds, guided reading, independent reading, Writing Workshop, word study, and phonics.

Students often have a burst in reading development during their Kindergarten year. Using interactive games and activities, students build their phonemic awareness, progressing from upper and lowercase letter recognition, letter sound connections, blending phonemes, and then decoding simple CVC and CVCe words. During read-alouds and other shared reading experiences, students practice basic reading comprehension skills (e.g., summarizing, sequencing, and predicting).

Kindergarteners are writers! Beginning with simple “picture stories,” students generate their own writing by drawing pictures to tell a story and labeling the pictures with letter sounds. They then progress to stretching out the sounds to write whole words using invented spelling and finally writing simple sentences using basic punctuation.

Using mentor texts as guides, kindergarten writers learn about the many elements of writing (e.g., connections between print and pictures, story structure) and incorporate that into their own writing experiences. Some favorite kindergarten mentor texts include: *Piggy and Elephant Series, The Three Billy Goats Gruff, The Carrot Seed,* and *How to Make Slime.*

Using *Handwriting Without Tears*, a program which mirrors Mead’s educational pedagogy, students learn proper letter formation, number formation, and proper pencil grip in a fun and accessible way.

MATHEMATICS

The Kindergarten Mathematics curriculum takes place throughout the day as well as during designated Math times. Individual and group experiences with math concepts are woven into daily investigations using a variety of manipulatives and work stations. Students begin the year by building with concrete materials in very tangible, multi-sensory experiences (such as cuisenaire rods, pattern blocks, unifix cubes, natural materials) to explore sorting and classifying, counting and sequencing, and developing a strong number sense. As the year progresses, students expand on these concepts through graphing data, measurement,

operations, and geometry. Kindergarteners participate in guided group activities together in order to build on social-emotional skills for a strong foundation of cooperative learning, playing, and problem-solving.

The focus for the Kindergarten year is to:

- become fluent in one-to-one correspondence;
- demonstrate correct number formation and number names;
- build different strategies for counting objects through daily practice;
- develop number sense from 1-20;
- build skills in counting to 100;
- understand and demonstrate that words and numerals represent a number of counted objects; and
- Recognize shapes and use geometric vocabulary to describe objects in daily life.

SCIENCE

Along with all the rich Science experiences that are embedded into Kindergarten interdisciplinary project work each day, Kindergarteners also have a special science lab each week. A large part of the science lab curriculum in Kindergarten is created around the interests of the children in the class. Thus, topics are determined as the year progresses. To start the year, lessons focus on observing birds at the window feeder, learning to identify common feeder birds, and engaging in activities connected to observing nature. The students also have opportunities to grow, and experiment with, plants in the greenhouse.

ESPAÑOL

In Kindergarten Español, students explore the Spanish language through a variety of traditional songs, popular songs, folk tales, games, and hands-on learning activities. Students also learn about the diverse cultures and celebrations of countries that speak Spanish by experiencing the music, folklore, literature, symbols, celebrations, and traditions of these countries. This year's curriculum includes basic greetings (e.g.,"me llamo", "como estas?"), polite words (e.g.,"cuantos años tengo", "por favor", "gracias"), basic classroom expectations (e.g.,"puedo ir al baño?", "quiero"), parts of the body, numbers 1 to 20, primary colors, shapes, and expressing emotions.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

The Kindergarten Physical Development curriculum explores both fine and gross motor skills as well as locomotor skills and balance. Body and space awareness will be taught in both large areas of play and smaller classrooms. Instructional and direction-driven games will be conducted.

Adventure Stories will be used to capture students' excitement and attention to encourage participation and listening. Creativity and imagination will be encouraged as, for example, we balance along obstacle courses, pretending to look for lions and monkeys in the jungle. Students practice rolling or throwing a ball, as to feed the animals by getting the ball into a bucket or knocking down a pin. These classes are age-appropriate and lots of fun!

MUSIC

Kindergarten students find the music inside them and find their own way of expressing that musicality. The teacher exposes students to many different genres of music and modes of expression. Students learn two overarching skills: singing in tune and keeping a steady beat. They practice these skills by playing solo singing games and rhythm games. They learn a huge number of songs from a variety of musical traditions, as well as hand movements that go along with the songs. During Group Sing, children are beginning to read the lyrics to the songs we are singing on the big screen. During guided “explore time,” students play various instruments, and the teacher encourages, makes suggestions, and makes observations about whether or not individual students are ready for private lessons. Students study songwriting, usually taking songs they already know and creating new lyrics.

ART

The focus in Kindergarten is an introduction to materials, as well as exposure to new processes and techniques. Emphasis is placed on expression, as well as the development of a basic art language and skills to be built upon throughout the years. Projects include drawing, painting, sculpture, ceramics, collage, weaving, and sewing. Students will talk about the intentions of their artwork to classmates. Each student has a sketchbook for class assignments and individual drawing.

DRAMA

The goal of Creative Drama class for Kindergarten is for children to feel safe enough to explore their imaginations and interact with each other on stage. Students will play theatre games which helps build connections, freedom of physicality and listening skills. Each week the students will be investigating characters and emotions. They will learn how to develop a story to dramatize. At the beginning of the year, the students will participate in improvisational exercises in which each student receives a character and an activity, and then presents it to the group. Then we add emotions to this exercise. This work helps us move into story structure. We explore how stories have a beginning, middle and end, as well as a conflict and resolution. We work on different stories each week. For these dramatizations, we use stories the students have read in class, folktales from various cultures, as well as new stories that are spontaneously created during class.

STEAM

Kindergarteners are exposed to STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art & Mathematics) activities daily, through hands-on interactive, multi-disciplinary experiences in the classrooms and outdoors, but also during dedicated exploration time in the STEAM lab.

GRADE 1

OVERVIEW

In Grade 1, we build upon the skills we introduced the previous. At this point, students are familiar with school behaviors and expectations. This is the year we begin to “dig into” and help develop good habits.

LANGUAGE ARTS

Grade 1 Language Arts emphasizes a balanced literacy experience including reading, writing, phonics, and handwriting practice. Building on the solid foundation from Kindergarten, students develop from beginning readers, decoding simple books with basic spelling patterns, to more complex texts. Phonics work supports each student’s development as they work with blends, digraphs, and vowel patterns, to name a few. Each student practices picking “just right” books, and they begin to identify book types that they love.

As students develop in their understanding of their own reading levels and interests, they participate in whole and small group experiences to read and discuss literature. These “book clubs” are a wonderful chance to begin to develop reading comprehension skills focusing on identifying setting, characters, and plot initially. As the year progresses, students are asked to think more about the books by inferring, connecting, and reflecting on what they are reading. The year ends with a culminating “series book review” project. Some book series students could choose from are: *Little Bear, Frog and Toad, Houndsley & Catina, Young Cam Jansen, Bunnicula and Friends, Amelia Bedelia, Pinky and Rex, Fly Guy, Flat Stanley, and Henry and Mudge.* Ultimately, the goal is to not only develop each student’s skills as a reader, but to encourage and support his/her love of reading and literature.

Using the best of programs like the *Reading and Writing Project*, students in Grade 1 expand their writing beyond simple sentences to add detail and complexity. They study different mentor texts during units on informational, narrative, and opinion writing and discuss and incorporate the elements of each separate type of writing into their own work. Basic punctuation and other mechanics such as periods, capitalization, and word spacing are emphasized. Students also begin to explore the revising and editing phase of writing. After meeting with peers and teachers, students revisit their writing and begin to edit to clarify their ideas and writing, fix up punctuation, and begin to focus on spelling, especially sight words. They also have daily handwriting practice using *Handwriting Without Tears*.

MATHEMATICS

Grade 1 Mathematics takes place throughout each day during classroom routines, investigations and play, as well as during designated math curriculum times. Whenever possible, math learning and skill development evolve from real experiences students have when exploring, problem-solving, or in play. While paper and pencil math experiences are part of math learning in Grade 1, students are just as frequently building understanding and skill by using concrete materials such as cuisenaire rods, unifix cubes, base-ten blocks, pattern blocks, tangrams, and currency. Grade 1 Math cultivates an enthusiasm for math, a playfulness for math, and emphasizes exploring math thinking and strategies as students work to solve

problems and build their math skills while experimenting, in play, and during math classes.

The focus for Grade 1 math is:

- additional and subtraction within 100;
- place value up to 100s;
- fractions;
- Two dimensional shapes and three-dimensional objects; and
- Units of measurement, including time, money, and distance.

SCIENCE

A large part of the Science curriculum in Grade 1 is created around the interests of the children in the class. Thus, topics are determined as the year progresses. To start the year, lessons focus on observing birds at the window feeder, learning to identify common feeder birds, and engaging in activities connected to observing nature. The students have opportunities to grow, and experiment with, plants in the greenhouse. Students interested in writing are encouraged to do so.

ESPAÑOL

In Grade 1 Español, students explore the Spanish language through a variety of traditional songs, popular songs, folk tales, games, and hands-on learning activities. Students also learn about the diverse cultures and celebrations of countries that speak Spanish by experiencing the music, folklore, literature, symbols, celebrations, and traditions of these countries. This year's curriculum includes basic greetings (e.g.,"me llamo, como estas?"), polite words (e.g.,"cuantos años tengo, por favor, gracias"), basic classroom expectations (e.g.,"puedo ir al baño?", "quiero . . ."), parts of the body, numbers 1 to 20, primary colors, shapes, and expressing emotions.

SOCIAL STUDIES

The Grade 1 Social Studies curriculum is woven into all aspects of the school day as opposed to taking place during isolated social studies classes. Goals include each student's evolving knowledge of self, family, community, and culture. As students build their understanding of self, they are simultaneously working on understanding the different communities they belong to and the different roles and their function in that community. Projects could include; "About Me" books, "My Community" study (school, town, country, etc), "Same/Different" studies, and "Family" studies.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Beginner sports skills will be introduced in Grade 1**,** to include proper throwing techniques, rolling a ball with two hands or one, underhand and overhead catching, striking skills, kicking, bouncing and trapping (stopping a ball with a scoop or bucket, even with a foot). Balance and locomotor skills like galloping, skipping, log roll, somersault, jumping, marching, hopping and shuffling will be taught through instruction and applied in fun and engaging games. Team building activities will be introduced to help teach cooperative

play. All skills will be taught at very age appropriate and beginner levels and built up from there to ensure understanding and most importantly, building confidence. The goal for this age range is that students go home talking about or showing a skill they have learned. That alone will showcase confidence and the beginning of a healthy and active lifestyle.

MUSIC

Grade 1 students find the music inside them and find their own way of expressing that musicality. The teacher exposes students to many different genres of music and modes of expression. Students learn two overarching skills: singing in tune and keeping a steady beat. They practice these skills by playing solo singing games and rhythm games. They learn a huge number of songs from a variety of musical traditions, as well as hand movements that go along with the songs. During Group Sing, children read the lyrics to the songs we are singing on the big screen. During guided “explore time,” students play various instruments, and the teacher encourages, makes suggestions, and makes observations about whether or not individual students are ready for private lessons. First-grade students often learn a few simple melodies on the piano. Students study songwriting, often taking songs they already know and creating new lyrics. First graders have several opportunities to share their work with an audience.

ART

The focus in Grade 1 is a continued investigation to materials, as well as exposure to new processes and techniques. Emphasis is placed on expression, as well as the development of a basic art language and skills to be built upon throughout the years. Projects include drawing, painting, sculpture, ceramics, collage, weaving, and sewing. Students will talk about the intentions of their artwork to classmates. Each student has a sketchbook for class assignments and individual drawing.

DRAMA

The goal of Creative Drama class for Grade 1 is for children to feel safe enough to explore their imaginations and interact with each other on stage. Students will play theatre games which helps build connections, freedom of physicality and listening skills. Each week the students will be investigating characters and emotions. They will learn how to develop a story to dramatize. At the beginning of the year, the students will participate in improvisational exercises in which each student receives a character and an activity, and then presents it to the group. Then we add emotions to this exercise. This work helps us move into story structure. We explore how stories have a beginning, middle and end, as well as a conflict and resolution. We work on different stories each week. For these dramatizations, we use stories the students have read in class, folktales from various cultures, as well as new stories that are spontaneously create during class.

STEAM

Students are exposed to STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art & Mathematics) activities daily, through hands-on interactive, multi-disciplinary experiences in the classrooms and outdoors, but also during dedicated exploration time in the STEAM lab.

GRADE 2

OVERVIEW

Grade 2 students develop a new independence and sense of responsibility. The students experience the school differently, as they travel to some classes from the Home Center and manage classroom materials (notebooks, pencils, etc). Friendships and trust for their fellow students deepen, and advocating more independently for themselves becomes second nature.

LANGUAGE ARTS

In Grade 2 Language Arts, students continue to develop the basic skills that form the building blocks for later learning. During these years, one sees the shift from “learning to read” to “reading to learn.” Readers further develop their word attack strategies as they move toward reading fluently and with expression. The focus shifts from decoding to comprehension, and students are asked to summarize, predict, recognize cause and effect, and character development, and begin to infer with the help of context clues. As writers, our Grade 2 students write personal narratives, stories, and poetry, and they respond to reading comprehension questions that develop and demonstrate deep understanding. Students also learn basic parts of speech – nouns, adjectives, verbs, and adverbs – using hands-on materials, and they “build” sentences with these materials before they are asked to apply these rules to their writing. As listeners and speakers, students are asked to follow basic directions, paraphrase information, and recount experiences or retell stories in a logical sequence. In addition, cursive handwriting is introduced in Grade 2 using the program *Handwriting Without Tears*, which mirrors our educational pedagogy.

Texts may include: the *Frog and Toad* series, *Mouse Tales*, the *Nate the Great* series, *The King’s Equal, My Father’s Dragon*, grade-level biographies and other informational texts.

MATHEMATICS

Mathematics experiences in Grade 2 are woven into everyday routines and practices in the center while also being part of conversation and play. In addition, students participate in daily 40-minutes class sessions, where they construct meaning across a range of math concepts as they progress from the concrete (with manipulatives) to a representational world (of pictures), before demonstrating the ability to work with math ideas in their more abstract forms. *FIRST IN MATH* (FIM) is an online tool we use for exploration, self-guided practice and math enrichment.

The focus for the Grade 2 year is to:

- develop number sense through frequent experiences and a variety of concrete materials;
- build understanding of place value to the 1000s and base ten operations;
- achieve fluency with addition and subtraction math facts (to 20);
- conduct surveys and present conclusions in graphical forms;
- work confidently with units of measure such as money, time and distance; and
- investigate and problem-solve with two-dimensional shapes and three-dimensional objects.

SCIENCE

A large part of the Science curriculum for Grade 2 is created around the interests of the children in the class. Thus, topics are determined as the year progresses. To start the year, lessons focus on observing birds at the window feeder, learning to identify common feeder birds, and engaging in activities connected to observing nature. The students have opportunities to grow, and experiment with, plants in the greenhouse. The Grader 2 curriculum encourages them to record their observations with a combination of sketching, writing, and data collection. As the year progresses, they keep a written record of other topics covered.

ESPAÑOL

In Grade 2 Español, students are exposed to the language, customs and festivities of Spanish speaking countries through a number of media such as authentic songs, popular songs, and authentic literature or poetry. Students learn through games and hands-on learning activities. The curriculum mimics, whenever possible, the social studies curriculum. This year's curriculum includes vocabulary related to the family, the house, food, clothing, the weather and seasons. Particular attention is given to festivities and holidays of Spanish speaking countries through the creation of crafts and projects.

SOCIAL STUDIES

The Grade 2 Social Studies curriculum is woven into all aspects of the school day as opposed to taking place during isolated social studies classes. Goals include each student's evolving knowledge of self, family, community, and culture. As students build their understanding of self, they are simultaneously working on understanding the different communities they belong to and the different roles and their function in that community. Projects could include; "About Me" books, "My Community" study (school, town, country, etc), "Same/Different" studies, and "Family" studies.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Beginner sports skills will continue to be introduced in Grade 2, which includes proper throwing techniques, rolling a ball with two hands or one, underhand and overhead catching, striking skills, kicking, bouncing and trapping (stopping a ball with a scoop or bucket, even with a foot). Also 2- to 3-step instructions on how to complete a proper manipulative or motor skill will be taught and practiced to ensure proper technique. Balance and locomotor skills like galloping, skipping, log roll, somersault, jumping, marching, hopping and shuffling will be taught through instruction and applied in fun and engaging games. Team building activities will be introduced to help teach cooperative play. Sportsmanship and understanding how to be a gracious winner and how to cope properly when you do not win, will always be reinforced in all classes. All skills will be taught at very age appropriate and beginner levels and built up from there to ensure understanding and most importantly, building confidence. The goal for this age range is that students go home talking about or showing a skill they have learned. That alone will showcase confidence and the beginning of a healthy and active lifestyle.

MUSIC

Grade 2 students find the music inside them and find their own way of expressing that musicality. The teacher exposes students to many different genres of music and modes of expression. Students learn two overarching skills: singing in tune and keeping a steady beat. They practice these skills by playing solo singing games and rhythm games. They learn a huge number of songs from a variety of musical traditions, as well as hand movements that go along with the songs. During Group Sing, children read the lyrics to the songs we are singing on the big screen. During guided "explore time," students play various instruments, and the teacher encourages, makes suggestions, and makes observations about whether or not individual students are ready for private lessons. Second-grade students often learn a few simple melodies on the piano. At this age, students are introduced to musical notation by playing interactive note-reading games. Students study songwriting, sometimes taking songs they already know and adding new lyrics, and sometimes beginning to experiment with creating original melodies as well. Second graders have several opportunities to share their work with an audience.

ART

The focus in Grade 2 is a continued investigation to materials, as well as exposure to new processes and techniques. Emphasis is placed on expression, as well as the development of a basic art language and skills to be built upon throughout the years. Projects include drawing, painting, sculpture, ceramics, collage, weaving, and sewing. Students will talk about the intentions of their artwork to classmates. Each student has a sketchbook for class assignments and individual drawing.

DRAMA

Theatreworks class gives Grade 2 students a solid foundation for theatre arts at Mead. Students learn the fundamentals of improvisation, in order to learn a particular style of theatre, but also to learn basic foundations of acting technique. Students focus on learning to be part of an ensemble on stage and the differences between cooperation and collaboration. Students focus a great deal on the skill of receiving, which forms the basis of all offers onstage. We move onto exploring the elements of a scene in a play, its structure and format, and also investigating the elements in playmaking.

STEAM

Grade 2 students are exposed to STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art & Mathematics) activities daily, through hands-on interactive, multi-disciplinary experiences in the classrooms and outdoors, but also during dedicated exploration time in the STEAM lab.

GRADE 3

OVERVIEW

Grade 3 students experience greater independence and a heightened sense of responsibility. Students begin to use planners to keep track of their assignments and other obligations. They are issued school-owned, personalized Chromebooks for use the classrooms, and are exposed to the Altitude Learning Platform in a routine and conscious manner. Third graders travel to most of their classes outside of the Home Center and learn how to manage their time, and their personal classroom materials. Friendships and trust for their fellow students continue to deepen, and self-advocacy skills, and being good community members have become routine. Third graders are able to participate for the first time in team sports, and take this right of passage very seriously!

LANGUAGE ARTS

In Grade 3 Language Arts**,** students read a variety of increasingly complex texts and examine setting, plot, characters, conflict, and resolution, with a focus on using context clues to find the meaning of unfamiliar words. Comprehension questions become more complex as well and require increased inference and perspective-taking. The program emphasizes writing fluency and skill, and students actively practice the basic components of the writing process:

- brainstorming – often using graphic organizers;
- writing a first draft;
- revising for content; and
- editing—including grammar, spelling, and mechanics.

Students practice writing paragraphs with topic and closing sentences and relevant detail, completing two and three-paragraph literary reviews. They write personal narratives and poetry, and they study multiple poetic forms. Students build upon past grammar instruction and diagram sentences to solidify understanding of proper sentence construction. Simple and compound sentences are studied, and students are expected to use a variety of sentence structures – with proper use of punctuation and mechanics, including ending punctuation, commas, semicolons, capitalizing, etc. – in their written work. As listeners and speakers, students read their work aloud, respond to and ask questions, make and share connections, compare and contrast story elements, and discuss points of view. 3rd graders are taught cursive handwriting using the program *Handwriting Without Tears*, which mirrors our educational pedagogy.

Texts may include: *Freckle Juice, Frindle, The World According to Humphrey, The Magic Finger, The One and Only Ivan, Clementine, The Mouse and the Motorcycle, Charlotte's Web*, grade-level biographies and other informational texts.

MATHEMATICS

The Grade 3 Mathematics experience continues to construct meaning across a range of math concepts as students progress from the concrete (with manipulatives) to a representational world (of pictures) before demonstrating the ability to work with math ideas more abstract forms.

The focus for Grade 3 is to:

- build understanding of number sense as it relates to place value to the 1000s;
- extend fluency with addition and subtraction math facts to adding and subtracting two- and three-digit numbers;
- develop understanding of and fluency with multiplication and division facts;
- develop understanding of fractions as equal parts of a whole;
- explore the attributes of two-dimensional and three-dimensional shapes;
- utilize multiplication skills to explore area and perimeter of rectangles through the use of square units;
- confidently read time to the nearest minute and calculate time intervals;
- measure length to the nearest ½ inch, ¼ inch, cm, and mm; and
- collect, record, and interpret data using a variety of methods.

FIRST IN MATH is an online tool used for math facts assessment (grades 3-8), self-guided practice, and math enrichment. Other math resources include: *engageny*, *Math Mammoth*, and *MyMath* by McGraw Hill.

SCIENCE

The Grades 3 and 4 science curriculum follows a biennial format; one year is "Investigators" and the next is "Space."

Investigators is a hands-on course designed to introduce students to many of the subjects within science as well as to the procedures used in scientific investigations. Classes are a combination of lab activities, reading, and discussions. Students continue to hone the scientific observation and note-taking skills begun in the K-1-2 curriculum. They also begin working on the skills of basic notetaking and writing to express their findings. Through the year, several different units or topics are covered, some of which investigate "pure" sciences (such as chemistry), and some of which follow a theme which requires the use of many different scientific disciplines (such as forensic science, when students work together to solve a mystery by examining the clues left for them). Subjects covered come from a survey given to students at the start of the year and may include birds & migration, chemistry, electricity and magnetism, microscopy, forensic science, earth science (rocks, minerals & fossils). and solar energy.

Space follows the trimester calendar with three separate but related units: Outer Space and the Universe; Astronauts and Living in Space; and Rockets. A combination of hands-on activities, discussions, and presentations allows students to discover more about the topics they vote on at the start of the year. These topics include: origins of the Universe, galaxies, stars and our solar system; humans living and working in the weightless environment of space (including the need for exercise and good nutrition), and how spacesuits help humans survive in the cold vacuum of space; and, finally, how rockets fly, including lessons in Newton's 3rd Law of Motion and aerodynamics. The rocketry unit includes hands-on experimentation in "indoor rocket" design and flight tests. In this curriculum, students work on the skills of basic note taking and writing to express their findings.

ESPAÑOL

Third grade is the transition between the Centers, which brings a shift in language instruction. In Grade 3 Español, students are introduced to basic reading and writing in many ways, including word puzzles or creating labels for objects in or outside of the classroom. Grammar is presented sequentially and acquired through consistent and repeated exposure. Students focus attention to the festivities and traditions important in Hispanic culture. The curriculum still follows a thematic approach, and it is inspired by students' emerging and evolving interests. The main question we answer is "Who (and how) am I, and who (and how) are the people around me?" By the end of the year, students are able to ask what someone's name is and respond, describe themselves, discuss their age, color of their hair and eyes, and describe family members in relation to themselves. Students begin to study conjugations in the present tense, identify school objects, use common prepositions, and learn vocabulary about animals.

Texts may include: *Teach Them SPANISH 3*.

SOCIAL STUDIES

Grades 3 and 4 Social Studies follows a two-year cycle in which students are introduced to the events that led Europeans to choose to settle on the East Coast of the United States through the Civil War. The curriculum is designed to foster students' curiosity, help them make connections to historical events, and gain a deeper understanding of the various points of view regarding the early development of the United States. Lessons focus on group work, building research skills, hands-on activities, creative reenactments, and field trips.

In one year, the focus is on the essential question, *"How does the environment shape one's culture?"* Lessons start with an investigation of the Northeast Woodland Native People. Next, we study the Pilgrims, the Massachusetts Bay Colony, and the southern and middle regions of the eastern coast. The year culminates with the founding of the 13 colonies and the events leading up to the American Revolution.

Key topics and lessons include: Walks in nearby woods to become familiar with the terrain as it existed when Europeans arrived on this continent; The Mayflower and the Mayflower Compact; a model Thanksgiving Dinner; a field trip to the Pequot Museum; Guest lecturers From The Bruce Museum; and a research project. In the research project, examples of books used for research are: *A Unit About Woodland Indians, Daily Life in a Plains Indian Village 1868 and Life in a Longhouse Village*. Movies viewed may include *Desperate Crossing The Untold Story of the Mayflower, Native Americans: People of the Forest.*

In the alternating year, the class explores American History from the American Revolution and early slavery to Westward Expansion and the Civil War. We start with the essential question, *"How do you shape personal values as a member of the community?"* Students participate in a broad range of collaborative cross-curricular activities that are designed to engage and enhance their learning. Each unit culminates in an experiential project.

Key topics and lessons include: Revolutionary War; Slavery and the Triangle Trade Route; Trade; the Lewis and Clark Expedition; Territories; Spanish/ American War; Creation Of Timeline Of Events: and a research

project. In the research project, examples of books used for research are: *Daily Life in a Covered Wagon* and *If You Traveled West on a Covered Wagon.* Movies viewed may include *Lewis & Clark: The Journey of the Corps of Discovery.*

The Oregon Trail Unit culminates with a full day interactive experience. Students travel the school grounds in wagons experiencing all the beauties and hardships pioneers experienced traveling across the country.

VALUES

Small groupings of same age students meet once a week with their Home Center Director to set and reflect upon personal and group goals, work on collaboration and team building skills through activities and group discussions. Learning to work together fosters as sense of trust and understanding in the group, and permits authentic, deeper conversations on age-appropriate developmental topics as the year progresses. These activities also help students begin to foster a sense of self, and enable them to apply this knowledge as they approach their work and interactions with others in the community in an empathetic, respectful and genuine manner.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

The Physical Development Curriculum consists of four areas when entering Grade 3: Team Sports, Beginner Fitness, Team Building Activities and New Sport Exposure to emphasize overall Healthy Lifestyle patterns. As in all curriculum areas, each child's learning is observed in relation to Mead's Seven School Skills: TO THINK, TO INTUIT, TO IMAGINE, TO RECEIVE, TO ACT, TO EXPRESS, TO RESPECT.

Team Sports - The primary objective of this activity is to allow each child the opportunity to experience being a member of a team. Practicing individual and group skills and learning to face the challenges of game situations are important aspects of this experience. Soccer, basketball and softball are offered as the primary sports with games scheduled against other schools our size. All students have the opportunity to participate in games. Game Rules, Sportsmanship, Fair Play and "doing your best" are highly reinforced.

Beginner Fitness - Classes offer a unique opportunity for students to work on coordination, agility, balance, cardiovascular endurance and muscle strength using their own body weight. Hand-eye and foot-eye coordination, movement, spatial awareness, force, energy, anatomy and physiology will all be learned through Beginner Fitness. Individual challenges are presented. These classes will help students learn how the body can create force to control speed and strength while pushing themselves to limits they never knew they could. Confidence may be built in a way they've never experienced.

Team Building - Through team formatted activities, students will learn the importance of working in a team environment including how to cooperate with others and how to compromise to get to a goal. Adaptivity and creativeness will be widely used to reach activity goals and to learn how to solve issues in more than just one manner. Positive reinforcement and encouragement among peers will be reiterated. Team competition will be present, as well as reaching goals as an entire class.

New Sport Exposure - This will be a great opportunity for students to experience new sports. Some sports that will be implemented include: Volleyball, Badminton, Cricket, Cross Country and more traditional sports like Flag Football and Hockey. Students will be able to try sports that they never have before while applying skills learned through previous Physical Development experiences.

MUSIC

In Grade 3, students learn musical notation. Through their study of the soprano recorder, students learn how to read notes and rhythms, and they learn sensitivity and dynamics. All students in Grade 3 study the handbells: in larger groups, these children learn important rhythmic and ensemble skills as they work on complex handbell arrangements and then perform them in front of an audience. In songwriting, students learn about song structure, and their compositions begin to get more sophisticated. Grade 3 students spend a significant amount of time playing many different instruments, including the drum kit, on which they learn a basic rock beat. They learn to sing many songs, and there is a classical unit during which they learn about musical periods and important composers. Children have many opportunities to share their work in front of an audience, and overcoming stage fright is an important aspect of the Grade 3 curriculum.

ART

The focus of Grade 3 will be a hands-on exploration of familiar materials, as well as exposure to new processes and techniques. Emphasis will be placed on expression, as well as the development of a basic art language to be built upon throughout the years. Open Studio Times are available for students to come into the Art Center to work independently.

Grade 3 Art curriculum follows a biennial format.

Year (A)

- Baroque Figures – students design an ornate figure with decorative lines;
- Perspective Drawing –2 and 3 point perspective;
- Color mixing/Color theory- painting Shady Snakes and Tinted Flowers;
- Advertisement – eye catching posters with a silly twist;
- Clay - pinch pots, coil and slab building techniques making a Tea Light Owl;
- Sewing- machine sewing aprons, vests and hats to wear on the Oregon Trail;
- Piñatas - additive sculpture in paper;
- Picasso Portraits- Cubism and the 4th dimension;
- Pointillism - Impressionistic paintings in the style of George Seurat; and
- Personal sketchbook – class assignments, note-taking and individual journeying.

Year (B)

- Line Castles – building a picture with basic shapes and lines;
- Shape Monsters – inspired by *Where the Wild Things Are;*
- Color mixing/color theory – Compass Circles;
- Eric Carle – paint and shape animal collages;
- Beaver Pond – a painting that illustrates the beaver's home;
- Mars Landscape - students paint a monochromatic landscape of Mars;
- Paper Animals – papier-mache animals;
- Advertisement – eye catching posters;
- Sewing – finger puppets and stuffed animals;
- Weaving – wrapped coil basket, potholder, wooden basket;
- Clay - pinch pots, coil and slab building techniques; and
- Wood – String Art Boats.

DRAMA

Grades 3 and 4 Drama curriculum offers an introduction to the world of play creation. The students can determine if they wish to learn the more formal elements of play production, or enjoy the more immediate and spontaneous climate of dramatic play, as they build a story of their own making into a piece of theatre on the stage. Students will also be exposed to formal plays and learn the fundamentals of memorizing lines and blocking. Learning how to be completely present onstage and available to your scene partners is one of the most important skills in drama and forms the core values in the art of receiving for this curriculum.

STEAM

Students in Grade 3 are exposed to STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art & Mathematics) activities daily, through hands-on interactive, multi-disciplinary experiences in the classrooms and outdoors, but also during dedicated exploration time and elective classes in the STEAM lab.

TRIPS

Every other year, during the 2nd semester of Grade 3, students in Grades 3-8 go on an overnight Bonding Trip to the Berkshires for 3 days of outdoor environmental education. Bonding Trips are integral to the experience of a Mead School student. Older students are there to guide the younger students on this trip, with the goal of forging new friendships, stretching comfort zones, getting to know teachers in a more personal way, and of course, to have fun!

GRADE 4

OVERVIEW

In Grade 4, students are becoming stronger, independent learners, and experience greater independence and a heightened sense of responsibility. Students are comfortable using their personalized Chromebooks and the Altitude Learning Platform, and are becoming more proficient in managing their materials and staying ahead of their work. Fourth graders travel to most of their classes outside of the Home Center and learn how to manage their time, and their personal classroom materials. Friendships and trust for their fellow students continue to deepen, and self-advocacy skills, and being good community members have become routine.

LANGUAGE ARTS

In Grade 4, students actively read a wide range of literary styles and texts; build fluency and expression; identify the main idea, rising conflict, and resolution; visualize; summarize; draw conclusions; make inferences, predictions, and connections; build vocabulary; identify figurative language. Students support their thinking with evidence from the text, and they express their ideas and listen to those of others during class discussions.

As writers, 4th grade students are asked to create both narrative and expository pieces with a focus on sentence structure; building paragraphs with strong topic sentences, supporting details, and closing sentences that transition the reader to the next paragraph; introductions including a clear thesis statement; and concluding paragraphs. Revision and editing – including peer editing – are also emphasized as critical steps along the journey to become excellent writers. As speakers, students are asked to voice their opinions while making room for the opinions of others; read work aloud; respond to and ask questions; make and share connections, predictions, and other insights.

Building upon the parts of speech learned in past years, students tackle prepositions, objects of prepositions, linking verbs, predicate nouns and adjectives, action verbs, direct and indirect objects, and subordinating conjunctions. Students study complex sentences in addition to simple and compound sentences. Students are expected to incorporate all grammar instruction – taught using many methods, including sentence diagramming – consistently into their written work. *Word Voyage*, an online program focusing on root meanings and word cousins, challenges students to develop a rich and varied vocabulary and practice proper grammar and usage.

Texts may include: *Seedfolks, The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe, Tales from the Odyssey, Love That Dog, Hate That Cat, Marley: A Dog Like No Other, The One and Only Ivan, Tales of Despereaux, Riding Freedom; A Wrinkle in Time, Glencoe LA - Grammar Usage & Mechanics.*

MATHEMATICS

The Grade 4 Mathematics experience largely focuses on fluency. Fluency means an individual can perform skills and solve problems efficiently (i.e., with speed and accuracy) *without teacher support*. Students in Grade 4 work toward fluency across a range of elementary math concepts appropriate to their readiness and personal goals. At this level, students engage in experiences that progress from the concrete (with manipulatives), to the representational (pictures), to more abstract forms.

The focus for Grade 4 is to:

- connect the structure of the place value system through hundred thousand as it relates to multiplicative comparison (base ten operations);
- extend fluency of addition and subtraction math facts to larger numbers;
- use place value understanding to inform multi-digit multiplication using different strategies;
- explore factors and divisibility as they relate to division with one-digit divisors, with or without remainders, using the standard algorithms (long division);
- understand fraction equivalence and explore operations (addition and subtraction) of like fractions and mixed numbers;
- extend place value knowledge to confidently add and subtract numbers to two-decimal digits;
- confidently calculate area and perimeter of rectangles;
- explore angles as it relates to lines, rays, and line segments; and
- explore measurement in length, weight, and volume (US customary and metric).

FIRST IN MATH is an online tool used for math facts assessment (grades 3-8), self-guided practice, and math enrichment. Other math resources include: *engageny*, *Math Mammoth*, *MyMath* by McGraw Hill.

SCIENCE

The Grades 3 and 4 Science curriculum follows a biennial format; one year is “Investigators” and the next is “Space.”

Investigators is a hands-on course designed to introduce students to many of the subjects within science as well as to the procedures used in scientific investigations. Classes are a combination of lab activities, reading, and discussions. Students continue to hone the scientific observation and note-taking skills begun in the K-1-2 curriculum. They also begin working on the skills of basic notetaking and writing to express their findings. Through the year, several different units or topics are covered, some of which investigate “pure” sciences (such as chemistry), and some of which follow a theme which requires the use of many different scientific disciplines (such as forensic science, when students work together to solve a mystery by examining the clues left for them). Subjects covered come from a survey given to students at the start of the year and may include birds & migration, chemistry, electricity and magnetism, microscopy, forensic science, earth science (rocks, minerals & fossils). and solar energy.

Space follows the trimester calendar with three separate but related units: Outer Space and the Universe; Astronauts and Living in Space; and Rockets. A combination of hands-on activities, discussions, and

presentations allows students to discover more about the topics they vote on at the start of the year. These topics include: origins of the Universe, galaxies, stars and our solar system; humans living and working in the weightless environment of space (including the need for exercise and good nutrition), and how spacesuits help humans survive in the cold vacuum of space; and, finally, how rockets fly, including lessons in Newton's 3rd Law of Motion and aerodynamics. The rocketry unit includes hands-on experimentation in "indoor rocket" design and flight tests. In this curriculum, students work on the skills of basic note-taking and writing to express their findings.

ESPAÑOL

In Grade 4 Español, students continue working on the skills needed to become more comfortable in speaking, reading, and writing. Hands-on activities such as the creation of posters, comics, songs, and role playing facilitate a love for language learning. Grammar is presented sequentially and acquired through consistent and repeated exposure. Students focus attention to the festivities and traditions important in Hispanic culture. The main questions we answer are, "How is the world around me? How are other countries different from mine? What animals live there? How do people dress there? Who are some famous people coming from countries where Spanish is spoken? What are the cities in these countries?" Topics studied include subject pronouns, possessive adjectives, commands and expressions, describe a house and a city, order a meal, express likes and dislikes, compare and contrast Spanish speaking countries, cities, and people to those of the United States.

Texts may include: "*Teach Them SPANISH 4.*"

SOCIAL STUDIES

Grades 3 and 4 Social Studies follows a two-year cycle in which students are introduced to the events that led Europeans to choose to settle on the East Coast of the United States through the Civil War. The curriculum is designed to foster students' curiosity, help them make connections to historical events, and gain a deeper understanding of the various points of view regarding the early development of the United States. Lessons focus on group work, building research skills, hands-on activities, creative reenactments, and field trips.

In one year, the focus is on the essential question, *"How does the environment shape one's culture?"* Lessons start with an investigation of the Northeast Woodland Native People. Next, we study the Pilgrims, the Massachusetts Bay Colony, and the southern and middle regions of the eastern coast. The year culminates with the founding of the 13 colonies and the events leading up to the American Revolution.

Key topics and lessons include: Walks in nearby woods to become familiar with the terrain as it existed when Europeans arrived on this continent; The Mayflower and the Mayflower Compact; a model Thanksgiving Dinner; a field trip to the Pequot Museum; Guest lecturers From The Bruce Museum; and a research project. In the research project, examples of books used for research are: *A Unit About Woodland Indians*, *Daily Life in a Plains Indian Village 1868 and Life in a Longhouse Village*. Movies viewed may include *Desperate Crossing The Untold Story of the Mayflower, Native Americans: People of the Forest.*

In the alternating year, the class explores American History from the American Revolution and early slavery to Westward Expansion and the Civil War. We start with the essential question, *"How do you shape personal values as a member of the community?"* Students participate in a broad range of collaborative cross-curricular activities that are designed to engage and enhance their learning. Each unit culminates in an experiential project.

Key topics and lessons include: Revolutionary War; Slavery and the Triangle Trade; Trade; the Lewis and Clark Expedition; Territories; Spanish/ American War; Creation Of Timeline Of Events: and a research project. In the research project, examples of books used for research are: *Daily Life in a Covered Wagon* and *If You Traveled West on a Covered Wagon.* Movies viewed may include *Lewis & Clark: The Journey of the Corps of Discovery.*

Oregon Trail- The curriculum culminates in the Oregon Trail interactive experience, which gives a sense of the challenges pioneers experienced traveling across the country.

VALUES

Small groupings of same age students meet once a week with their Home Center Director to set and reflect upon personal and group goals, work on collaboration and team building skills through activities and group discussions. Learning to work together fosters as sense of trust and understanding in the group, and permits authentic, deeper conversations on age-appropriate developmental topics as the year progresses. These activities also help students begin to foster a sense of self, and enable them to apply this knowledge as they approach their work and interactions with others in the community in an empathetic, respectful and genuine manner.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

The Physical Development curriculum continues to consist of four areas for Grade 4: Team Sports, Beginner Fitness, Team Building Activities and New Sport Exposure to emphasize overall Healthy Lifestyle patterns. As in all curriculum areas, each child's learning is observed in relation to Mead's Seven School Skills: TO THINK, TO INTUIT, TO IMAGINE, TO RECEIVE, TO ACT, TO EXPRESS, TO RESPECT. As students move up in grades, they will be challenged with new skills to ensure they are progressing at an age appropriate level with positive reinforcement.

Team Sports - The primary objective of this activity is to allow each child the opportunity to experience being a member of a team. Practicing individual and group skills and learning to face the challenges of game situations are important aspects of this experience. Soccer, basketball and softball are offered as the primary sports with games scheduled against other schools our size. All students have the opportunity to participate in games. Game Rules, Sportsmanship, Fair Play and "doing your best" are highly reinforced.

Beginner Fitness - Classes offer a unique opportunity for students to work on coordination, agility, balance, cardiovascular endurance and muscle strength using their own body weight. Hand-eye and foot-eye coordination, movement, spatial awareness, force, energy, anatomy and physiology will all be learned through Beginner Fitness. Individual challenges are presented. These classes will help students learn how

the body can create force to control speed and strength while pushing themselves to limits they never knew they could. Confidence may be built in a way they've never experienced.

Team Building - Through team formatted activities, students will learn the importance of working in a team environment including how to cooperate with others and how to compromise to get to a goal. Adaptivity and creativeness will be widely used to reach activity goals and to learn how to solve issues in more than just one manner. Positive reinforcement and encouragement among peers will be reiterated. Team competition will be present, as well as reaching goals as an entire class. Elimination games, such as Dodgeball, will not be held!

New Sport Exposure - This will be a great opportunity for students to experience new sports. Some sports that will be implemented include: Volleyball, Badminton, Cricket, Cross Country and more traditional sports like Flag Football and Hockey. Students will be able to try sports that they never have before while applying skills learned through previous Physical Development experiences.

MUSIC

In Grade 4, students continue their study of musical notation. Students learn how to read notes and rhythms, and they learn sensitivity and dynamics. Beginning in Grade 4, Recorder Ensemble is an elective that is available to them; in this rigorous, exciting mixed-age class, they study classical music, work on reading music, and perform a number of times throughout the year. All students in Grade 4 study the handbells: in larger groups, these children learn important rhythmic and ensemble skills as they work on complex handbell arrangements and then perform them in front of an audience. In songwriting, students learn about song structure, and their compositions become more sophisticated. Grade 4 students spend a significant amount of time playing many different instruments, including the drum kit, on which they learn various beats. They learn to sing many songs, and there is a classical unit during which they learn about musical periods and important composers. Children have many opportunities to share their work in front of an audience, and overcoming stage fright is a big part of the Grade 4 curriculum.

ART

The focus of Grade 4 will be hands-on exploration of familiar materials, as well as exposure to new processes and techniques. Emphasis will be placed on expression, as well as the development of a basic art language to be built upon throughout the years. Open Studio Times are available for students to come into the Art Center to work independently.

Grade 4 Art curriculum follows a biennial format.

Year (A)

- Baroque Figures – students design an ornate figure with decorative lines;
- Perspective Drawing –2 and 3 point perspective;
- Color mixing/Color theory- painting Shady Snakes and Tinted Flowers;
- Advertisement – eye catching posters with a silly twist;
- Clay - pinch pots, coil and slab building techniques making a Tea Light Owl;

- Sewing- machine sewing aprons, vests and hats to wear on the Oregon Trail;
- Piñatas - additive sculpture in paper;
- Picasso Portraits- Cubism and the 4th dimension;
- Pointillism - Impressionistic paintings in the style of George Seurat; and
- Personal sketchbook – class assignments, note-taking and individual journeying.

Year (B)

- Line Castles – building a picture with basic shapes and lines;
- Shape Monsters – inspired by *Where the Wild Things Are;*
- Color mixing/color theory – Compass Circles;
- Eric Carle – paint and shape animal collages;
- Beaver Pond – a painting that illustrates the beaver's home;
- Mars Landscape - students paint a monochromatic landscape of Mars;
- Paper Animals – papier-mache animals;
- Advertisement – eye catching posters;
- Sewing – finger puppets and stuffed animals;
- Weaving – wrapped coil basket, potholder, wooden basket;
- Clay - pinch pots, coil and slab building techniques; and
- Wood – String Art Boats.

DRAMA

Grades 3 and 4 Drama curriculum offers an introduction to the world of play creation. The students can determine if they wish to learn the more formal elements of play production, or enjoy the more immediate and spontaneous climate of dramatic play, as they build a story of their own making into a piece of theatre on the stage. Students will also be exposed to formal plays and learn the fundamentals of memorizing lines and blocking. Learning how to be completely present onstage and available to your scene partners is one of the most important skills in drama and forms the core values in the art of receiving for this curriculum.

STEAM

Students in Grade 4 are exposed to STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art & Mathematics) activities daily, through hands-on interactive, multi-disciplinary experiences in the classrooms and outdoors, but also during dedicated exploration time and elective classes in the STEAM lab.

TRIPS

Bonding Trips are integral to the experience of a Mead School student. Every year, during the fall semester, students in Grades 4 & 5 go to Sprout Creek Farm, in Poughkeepsie, New York for an overnight trip to a working farm. Under the guidance of SCF educators and Mead School faculty chaperones, they will help care for the animals, help prepare meals, and learn about the inner workings of a farm.

During the 2nd semester, 4th graders join grades 5-8 on an overnight Bonding Trip. Trips alternate yearly between City Tours and outdoor winter education. Students will either visit major metropolitan areas (recent years have included Philadelphia, Washington, D.C., and Boston) or alternate with a trip to the Berkshires during February for 3 days of outdoor environmental education. Older students are there to guide the younger students on these trips, with the goal of forging new friendships, stretching comfort zones, getting to know teachers in a more personal way, and of course, having fun!

The Mead School
MIDDLE SCHOOL

GRADE 5

OVERVIEW

Grade 5 students are the leaders in the Center. Much of what happens in 5th grade has everything to do with honing their independent learning and organizational skills, being responsible members of the community, and preparing for the challenges of an advanced curriculum, and increased performance expectations that accompany the work.

LANGUAGE ARTS

As they progress along the continuum, students are stretched to find deeper, layered meaning in a text, with an emphasis on analyzing an author's craft –identifying theme, tone, character development, and the use of various literary devices and other techniques. Reading assignments are longer, and comprehension questions probe for more complex contemplation and perspective-taking and responses that are consistently supported by text evidence.

As writers in 5th grade, students are asked to create both narrative and expository pieces using all aspects of the writing process: brainstorming, using graphic organizers; outlining; writing a first draft; revising for content; and editing for grammar, mechanics, and spelling. Increasingly sophisticated sentence structures are expected, and students consistently are asked to incorporate new grammar and mechanics learning into their written work. The five-paragraph, rhetorical argument essay is introduced, with an emphasis on the overall flow and build of one's well-supported argument. Writers are reminded that excellent writing truly comes together during the revision and editing phases – including peer editing. As speakers, students are asked to voice their opinions while making room for the views of others, read work aloud, respond to and ask questions, make and share connections.

Word Voyage, an online program focusing on root meanings and word cousins, challenges students to develop a rich and varied vocabulary and practice proper grammar and usage.

Texts may include: *The Phantom Tollbooth; Wonder; Inside Out and Back Again; Seedfolks; Marley: A Dog Like No Other; Bud, Not Buddy; Esperanza Rising; Out of the Dust; Flipped; Bridge to Terabithia.*

MATHEMATICS

The Grade 5 Mathematics experience continues to focus on fluency. Fluency means an individual can perform skills and solve problems efficiently (i.e., with speed and accuracy) *without teacher support*. Students in Grade 5 work toward fluency across a range of elementary math concepts appropriate to their readiness and personal goals. At this level, students engage in experiences that progress from the concrete (with manipulatives), to the representational (pictures), to more abstract forms.

The focus for Grade 5 is to:

- work confidently with the place value system through billion including addition and subtraction operations;
- use efficient algorithms for multiplication and division of multi-digit numbers;
- extend place value knowledge to confidently add and subtract numbers to three-decimal digits, and multiply and divide (decimal by decimal);
- explore addition and subtraction of like and unlike fractions;
- explore multiplying fractions and mixed numbers, as well as dividing unit fractions and dividing by unit fractions;
- investigate, measure accurately (customary and metric), and solve problems involving perimeter, area, and volume; and
- record and use data to calculate mean, median, and mode, and to represent data graphically using a variety of methods.

FIRST IN MATH is an online tool used for math facts assessment (grades 3-8), self-guided practice, and math enrichment. Other math resources include: engageny, Math Mammoth, MyMath by McGraw Hill

SCIENCE

Human Body introduces students to the workings of the body's systems (skeletal, muscular, circulatory, etc.), and shows how they are all connected. Emphasis is on how understanding the workings of one's own body can help in making healthy choices.

Classes are a combination of discussions, demonstrations, note-taking and research, and are based on the questions the students ask at the start of the school year. Labs offer hands-on choice activities such as surveys of the Mead population, working with the computer and digital lab equipment, doing experiments and other activities to investigate how body processes operate, etc.

Weekly homework includes activities to help students find ways to apply the concepts to their own lives, such as nutrition lessons via "food diaries," and readings from selected texts about each body system with accompanying questions to point students toward pertinent information. Students continue the skill work of written expression and notetaking.

ESPAÑOL

In Grade 5 Español, students continue working on the skills needed to become more comfortable in speaking, reading, and writing. Hands-on activities such as the creation of posters, comics, songs, and role playing are used to facilitate a love for language learning. Grammar is presented sequentially and acquired through consistent and repeated exposure. Students focus attention to the festivities and traditions important in Hispanic culture. Topics studied include prepositions, tú vs usted, possessive adjectives, present tense of –ar, -er, and -ir verbs, describing feelings using expressions with 'tener', and vocabulary related to chores and other activities around the house, towns, buildings, and countries, and telling time.

Texts may include: *Teach Them SPANISH 5*.

SOCIAL STUDIES

Grades 5 and 6 Social Studies curriculum follows a biennial format; one year is "World Religions" and the next is "Ancient Civilizations." Both courses start with guiding questions intended to develop critical thinking skills required to study another culture or period in history. The goals of both curricula are to develop the skills required to investigate history and cultures. These skills include reading non-fiction texts, research and formal writing and note-taking.

In **World Religions**, we ask students to consider the following questions: What is a fact, an assumption, and an opinion? What is sacred to you? Why? Can we appreciate that people hold different beliefs about what is sacred? Where and when did the major religions originate? To where did they spread? We seek, through this comparative study of world religions, to inspire a greater understanding of our own worldview and culture. Our goal is to learn to appreciate our own perspective so that we may respectfully study other religions and cultures. The students will focus on the origins and basic beliefs of five world religions: Hinduism, Judaism, Christianity, Buddhism and Islam. The course has been designed to address the knowledge and assumptions the students have, along with what they want to know. We ask the students to think critically and sensitively about the religious world. We believe that to inspire independent, creative thinkers, students must be informed as global citizens. As our primary texts, we will utilize *The Kids Book of World Religions*, by Jennifer Glossop, and *World Religions, Grades 6-8,* by Teacher Created Resources. We also will view film and internet-based tools to further learning. Finally, we will visit houses of worship for each religion studied to provide real world, experiential context to the class.

In **Ancient Civilizations**, we ask students to consider the primary question: What is a civilization? The primary text for the curriculum is *World History: Ancient Civilizations* published by McDougal Littell. We will investigate the ancient civilizations of Mesopotamia, Egypt, Rome, and China through the following themes that form the foundation of the standards issued by The National Council of Social Studies. See table on next page:

Theme	Question	Big Idea
Geography	How has the place where people lived been important in influencing where they lived? What effect does landscape and weather have on human life?	Civilizations developed in places that supported agriculture or trade or both.
Culture	Throughout history, what have cultures learned about each other? How have they learned it and how have they borrowed from other cultures to change themselves?	Ways of living change as humans interact with each other.
Economics	Have societies always been able to acquire what they needed or wanted? When societies are limited in what they can acquire, how do they choose what to do without?	Societies trade the surplus goods that they produce to obtain goods they lack.
Government	Throughout history how have societies developed laws to guide the behavior of their members? How did those laws affect the way people lived together?	Governments create law codes and political bodies to organize a society.
Belief Systems	Throughout history how have societies developed ideas of right and wrong? How do different belief systems compare?	Many religions and belief systems start with the ideas of a teacher or prophet.
Science & Technology	In different time periods, how have people solved the problem of spreading information over long distances? What other problems of daily life have people solved by using inventions, discoveries or new techniques?	New scientific discoveries change human understanding of the world.

VALUES

Small groupings of same age students meet once a week with their Home Center Director to set and reflect upon personal and group goals, work on collaboration and team building skills through activities and group discussions. Learning to work together fosters as sense of trust and understanding in the group, and permits authentic, deeper conversations on age-appropriate developmental topics as the year progresses. These activities also help students begin to foster a sense of self, and enable them to apply this knowledge as they approach their work and interactions with others in the community in an empathetic, respectful and genuine manner.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

The Physical Development curriculum will continue to consist of four areas when entering the 5th Grade: Team Sports, Beginner Fitness, Team Building Activities and New Sport Exposure to emphasize overall Healthy Lifestyle patterns. As in all curriculum areas, each child's learning is observed in relation to Mead's Seven School Skills: TO THINK, TO INTUIT, TO IMAGINE, TO RECEIVE, TO ACT, TO EXPRESS, TO RESPECT. At this level, effort and participation will be heavily emphasized so to continue to encourage students to both reach their full potential and be their best selves.

Team Sports - The primary objective of this activity is to allow each child the opportunity to experience being a member of a team. Practicing individual and group skills and learning to face the challenges of game situations are important aspects of this experience. Soccer, basketball and softball are offered as the primary sports with games scheduled against other schools our size. All students have the opportunity to participate in games. Game Rules, Sportsmanship, Fair Play and "doing your best" are highly reinforced.

Beginner Fitness - Classes offer a unique opportunity for students to work on coordination, agility, balance, cardiovascular endurance and muscle strength using their own body weight. Hand-eye and foot-eye coordination, movement, spatial awareness, force, energy, anatomy and physiology will all be learned through Beginner Fitness. Individual challenges are presented. These classes will help students learn how the body can create force to control speed and strength while pushing themselves to limits they never knew they could. Confidence may be built in a way they've never experienced.

Team Building - Through team formatted activities, students will learn the importance of working in a team environment including how to cooperate with others and how to compromise to get to a goal. Adaptivity and creativeness will be widely used to reach activity goals and to learn how to solve issues in more than just one manner. Positive reinforcement and encouragement among peers will be reiterated. Team competition will be present, as well as reaching goals as an entire class. Elimination games, such as Dodgeball, will not be held!

New Sport Exposure - This will be a great opportunity for students to experience new sports. Some sports that will be implemented include: Volleyball, Badminton, Cricket, Cross Country and more traditional sports like Flag Football and Hockey. Students will be able to try sports that they never have before while applying skills learned through previous Physical Development experiences.

MUSIC

In Grade 5, students take Introduction to Winds and Horns; they have a choice of studying the flute, clarinet, saxophone or trumpet. Students expand on their study of musical notation through sight-reading. In addition to sensitivity and dynamics, they learn the mechanics of basic technique such as proper embouchure and breathing. Recorder Ensemble is an elective that is available to these students as well; in this rigorous, exciting mixed-age class, they study classical music, work on reading music, and perform a number of times throughout the year. Beginning in Grade 5, choral singing is an option: in Serious Singers, students practice vocal harmony as they learn songs from a variety of musical traditions; while singing, they also learn important ensemble skills and breathing technique. Sound Tech is another curriculum available to some Grade 5 students. In Tech, children learn how

to use and maintain our sound equipment in the auditorium and the Music Room, and they run our performances by being a Soundboard Operator or a member of the Backstage Crew. Children have many opportunities to share their work in front of an audience, no matter what instrument they play; stage presence and learning how to perform effectively is a big part of the Grade 5 curriculum.

ART

The focus of Grade 5 is hands-on exploration of familiar materials, as well as exposure to new processes and techniques. The goal is for students to build their skills while working towards individual goals, conceptual thinking and self-expression. Open Studio Times are available for students to come into the Art Center to work independently.

- Facial Features – Rendering eyes, a nose and mouth using warm and cool colors;
- Facial Proportions – Drawing the human head in correct proportions and locations of its features;
- Self Portrait – Drawing a likeness with the use of a mirror;
- Ceramic Figures – Expression through the figure;
- Monoprint – Single impress of an image;
- Postage Stamp Prints – Students design their own postage stamp, carve a linoleum block and reproduce 20 prints;
- Enameling – Design pendants by fusing glass in a kiln;
- Collage – Investigating the work of Romare Bearden;
- Crayon Mosaics – Ancient art in everyday materials;
- Clay - Pinch pots, coil and slab building techniques, and glaze application; and
- Personal Sketchbook – Class assignments, note-taking and individual journeying.

DRAMA

Grade 5 Drama curriculum invites students to explore all aspects of play production. These students will work on a play, which they create and write or adapt themselves. Students explore what collaboration means and practice using cooperation as a stepping- stone to the more difficult skill of collaborating to create art. Students also learn how to break down a play into its creative elements and structure. Added to that are the production job categories like set, prop, and costume design and the value/responsibility of each position or “part” to the “whole” of the production. Each student has a production job in addition to his/her acting responsibilities. Through this, they experience interdependence as well as the impact that their choices have on their product. This is a workshop and may not transform into a parent-ready performance.

The Mead School Light Tech program is multi-year program with the main goal being that each tech student will learn and have experience in all aspects of theatrical backstage and lighting production. Students will learn stage management skills, how to program and run a lightboard, as well as how to use and run a spotlight. The Mead School tech student takes on the responsibility of all backstage and technical aspects for the productions on our main stage.

STEAM

Students in Grade 5 are exposed to STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art & Mathematics) activities daily, through hands-on interactive, multi-disciplinary experiences in the classrooms and outdoors, but also during dedicated exploration time and elective classes in the STEAM lab.

TRIPS

Bonding Trips are integral to the experience of a Mead School student. Every year, during the fall semester, students in Grades 4 & 5 go to Sprout Creek Farm, in Poughkeepsie, New York for an overnight trip to a working farm. Under the guidance of SCF educators and Mead School faculty chaperones, they will help care for the animals, help prepare meals, and learn about the inner workings of a farm.

During the 2nd semester, 5th graders join grades 4-8 on an overnight Bonding Trip. Trips alternate yearly between City Tours and outdoor winter education. Students will either visit major metropolitan areas (recent years have included Philadelphia, Washington, D.C., and Boston) or alternate with a trip to the Berkshires during February for 3 days of outdoor environmental education. Older students are there to guide the younger students on these trips, with the goal of forging new friendships, stretching comfort zones, getting to know teachers in a more personal way, and of course, having fun!

GRADE 6

OVERVIEW

As children move into sixth grade, they are becoming increasingly aware of themselves and their role in their community. Developmentally, children are now craving independence and increased responsibility. To accomplish these developmental goals, children are provided opportunities to practice advocating for their needs and organizing their schoolwork. Teachers provide active support, yet students are given every opportunity to accomplish their work independently. Classes focus on the power of each individual to become active and accountable for their learning. To understand their power, children are encouraged to know themselves and establish their confidence. They then use this confidence to achieve their academic, social and emotional goals.

LANGUAGE ARTS

Grade 6 Language Arts begins the formal development of and appreciation for written language. Students learn to:

- Understand and practice mechanics (grammar, punctuation, spelling, and vocabulary), specifically developing automaticity with all parts of speech;
- Practice writing in various styles (expository and narrative, formal and personal, poetry);
- Explore critical thinking skills to recognize inferences and nuance, find deeper meaning to text, and analyze literary elements;
- Translate that critical thinking into formal essay writing;
- Practice various note-taking methods, layout, and organization, including proper highlighting and annotating, effective use of post-its for quick notation;
- Create optimal learning situations for self; recognize their learning style and learning needs; use personal learning strategies, study skills, and habits of mind;
- Appreciate literature and the power of the written word; and
- Develop confidence in both written and verbal expression.

Guerilla Grammar - In addition to active practice of learned grammar by applying it to their writing, direct grammar instruction is also taught through a class called *Guerilla Grammar* where, through physical activities, students develop an innate understanding of mechanics in their bodies as well as their minds.

Word Voyage, an online program focusing on root meanings and word cousins, challenges students to develop a rich and varied vocabulary and practice proper grammar and usage.

Texts may include: *Home of the Brave, Farewell to Manzanar, Esperanza Rising, The Odyssey, Stealing Freedom, The Misfits, Wanting Mor, Monster, Countdown, Out of the Dust, The Liberation of Gabriel King,* and *Witness.*

MATHEMATICS

The primary thrust of the Mathematics program at this level is *fluency*. Fluency is the term we use to describe an individual who can perform skills and solve problems efficiently (i.e., with speed and accuracy) *without teacher support*. Students in Grade 6 will be working toward fluency across a range of elementary math concepts appropriate to their readiness and personal goals. *FIRST IN MATH* (FIM) is an online tool we use for math facts assessment, self-guided practice and math enrichment. While the program emphasizes improvement in numerical fluency and mathematical skills, the activities are also designed to strengthen problem-solving, reasoning and communication skills. FIM is used, as appropriate, to augment the hands-on classroom investigations and collaborations. Texts include *Hart McDougal Mathematics, Visible Learning.*

The focus of their year is to:

- demonstrate *automaticity* in math facts - addition and subtraction to 20, multiplication and division to 144;
- fluently multiply and divide multi-digit numbers using efficient algorithms;
- apply and extend understanding of numbers to rational numbers, while constructing an understanding of integers;
- extend and generalize patterns and arithmetic procedures by using variable expressions;
- work confidently with ratios to solve problems involving proportions;
- collect, analyze, summarize and interpret data using appropriate statistical methods; and
- investigate, measure accurately (customary and metric) and solve problems involving area, surface area and volume.

SCIENCE

Marine Science is a hands-on course designed to introduce students to the study of the ocean, both its physical and living elements. It is intended to give students the experiences, information, and concepts they need to become informed citizens and good stewards of our Earth.

During the first trimester, emphasis on field work allows students to work with and see ecology concepts in action. Field work includes quadrat-type surveys of shoreline creatures and plants, and water quality testing using digital probeware and water chemistry test kits. Thus, the class contributes to monitoring the health of the coastline at Stamford Cove. Each week's trip is used to reinforce concepts, practice scientific fieldwork techniques, and discuss our progress. The Fall Project ends with the class preparing and writing a report on their findings.

The second trimester project focuses on marine mammals. Students each conduct research on a whale of their choice and write a formal research paper, complete with citations. Classes in the third trimester include a unit on hurricanes, climate change, and coastal resilience, and a unit voted on by the students, either sharks, coral reefs, sea turtles, or the deep ocean. The year ends with a four-day trip to Cape Cod to reinforce the ecology concepts covered throughout the year, and go on a whale watch.

ESPAÑOL

Grade 6 marks the beginning of formal grammar instruction, therefore this is the first year of a more rigorous course that will lead to the completion of the requirements to enter Spanish 2 in 9th grade. The course is taught with the aid of an interactive online video produced by The BBC, "Mi Vida Loca." Grammar, vocabulary, and projects will follow the sequence of the episodes. Special projects designed to spark the interest of the students are assigned during the course of the year. Special attention is given to describe and celebrate the festivities and traditions important in Hispanic culture. A weekly quiz and quarterly tests are given, and homework is assigned on weekdays, as needed. At the end of the year, students will be able to understand the grammatical differences between masculine, feminine, singular, plural in nouns and adjectives and they will have a clear knowledge of Present Tense, and Future with 'ir' of regular and irregular verbs in –AR, -ER, and –IR. They will be able to express likes and dislikes, talk about themselves, and they will comfortably have short conversation using the vocabulary learned. Texts include: *¡Avancemos!1.*

SOCIAL STUDIES

Grades 5 and 6 social studies curriculum follows a biennial format; one year is "World Religions" and the next is "Ancient Civilizations." Both courses start with guiding questions intended to develop critical thinking skills required to study another culture or period in history. The goals of both curricula are to develop skills required to investigate history and cultures. These skills include reading non-fiction texts, research and formal writing and note-taking.

In **World Religions**, we ask students to consider the following questions: What is a fact, an assumption, and an opinion? What is sacred to you? Why? Can we appreciate that people hold different beliefs about what is sacred? Where and when did the major religions originate? To where did they spread? We seek, through this comparative study of world religions, to inspire a greater understanding of our own worldview and culture. Our goal is to learn to appreciate our own perspective so that we may respectfully study other religions and cultures. The students will focus on the origins and basic beliefs of five world religions: Hinduism, Judaism, Christianity, Buddhism and Islam. The course has been designed to address the knowledge and assumptions the students have, along with what they want to know. We ask the students to think critically and sensitively about the religious world. We believe that to inspire independent, creative thinkers, students must be informed as global citizens. As our primary texts, we will utilize *The Kids Book of World Religions*, by Jennifer Glossop, and *World Religions, Grades 6-8,* by Teacher Created Resources. We also will view film and internet-based tools to further learning. Finally, we will visit houses of worship for each religion studied to provide real world, experiential context to the class.

In **Ancient Civilizations**, we ask students to consider the primary question: What is a civilization? The primary text for the curriculum is *World History: Ancient Civilizations* published by McDougal Littell. We will investigate the ancient civilizations of Mesopotamia, Egypt, Rome, and China through the following themes that form the foundation of the standards issued by The National Council of Social Studies. See table on the next page:

Theme	Question	Big Idea
Geography	How has the place where people lived been important in influencing where they lived? What effect does landscape and weather have on human life?	Civilizations developed in places that supported agriculture or trade or both.
Culture	Throughout history, what have cultures learned about each other? How have they learned it and how have they borrowed from other cultures to change themselves?	Ways of living change as humans interact with each other.
Economics	Have societies always been able to acquire what they needed or wanted? When societies are limited in what they can acquire, how do they choose what to do without?	Societies trade the surplus goods that they produce to obtain goods they lack.
Government	Throughout history how have societies developed laws to guide the behavior of their members? How did those laws affect the way people lived together?	Governments create law codes and political bodies to organize a society.
Belief Systems	Throughout history how have societies developed ideas of right and wrong? How do different belief systems compare?	Many religions and belief systems start with the ideas of a teacher or prophet.
Science & Technology	In different time periods, how have people solved the problem of spreading information over long distances? What other problems of daily life have people solved by using inventions, discoveries or new techniques?	New scientific discoveries change human understanding of the world.

VALUES

Students meet once a week with their Home Center Director to set and reflect upon personal and group goals, work on collaboration and team building skills through activities and group discussions. Learning to work together fosters as sense of trust and understanding in the group, and permits authentic, deeper conversations on age-appropriate developmental topics as the year progresses. These activities also help students continue to foster a sense of self, and enable them to apply this knowledge as they approach their work and interactions with others in the community in an empathetic, respectful and genuine manner. A set curriculum is enhanced with topics of particular interest to the students, and can be generated from a personal request, current events, and coming of age. Separate conversations for boys and girls are sometimes held so that critical gender-specific discussions can be held more comfortably.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

The Physical Development Curriculum consists of four areas: Team Sports, Beginner Fitness, Team Building Activities and New Sport Exposure to emphasize overall Healthy Lifestyle patterns. As in all curriculum areas, each child's learning is observed in relation to Mead's Seven School Skills: TO THINK, TO INTUIT, TO IMAGINE, TO RECEIVE, TO ACT, TO EXPRESS, TO RESPECT.

Team Sports - The primary objective of this activity is to allow each child the opportunity to experience being a member of a team. Practicing individual and group skills and learning to face the challenges of game situations are important aspects of this experience. Soccer, basketball and softball are offered as the primary sports with games scheduled against other schools our size. All students have the opportunity to participate in games. Game Rules, Sportsmanship, Fair Play and "doing your best" are highly reinforced.

Beginner Fitness - Classes offer a unique opportunity for students to work on coordination, agility, balance, cardiovascular endurance and muscle strength using their own body weight. Hand-eye and foot-eye coordination, movement, spatial awareness, force, energy, anatomy and physiology will all be learned through Beginner Fitness. Individual challenges are presented. These classes will help students learn how the body can create force to control speed and strength while pushing themselves to limits they never knew they could. Confidence may be built in a way they've never experienced.

Team Building - Through team formatted activities, students will learn the importance of working in a team environment including how to cooperate with others and how to compromise to get to a goal. Adaptivity and creativeness will be widely used to reach activity goals and to learn how to solve issues in more than just one manner. Positive reinforcement and encouragement among peers will be reiterated. Team competition will be present, as well as reaching goals as an entire class. Elimination games, such as Dodgeball, will not be held!

New Sport Exposure - This will be a great opportunity for students to experience new sports. Some sports that will be implemented include: Volleyball, Badminton, Cricket, Cross Country and more traditional sports like Flag Football and Hockey. Students will be able to try sports that they never have before while applying skills learned through previous Physical Development experiences.

MUSIC

In Grade 6, students have the option of taking **Advanced Winds and Horns**, in which students in their second year of instrument study go into more depth in their learning of the flute, clarinet, saxophone or trumpet; they play more difficult pieces, achieve greater fluency, and develop crucial ensemble skills. The Grade 6 Music curriculum also features **Rock Band**, in which students focus primarily on piano, guitar, drums, and vocals; these students study popular music, pick a song to learn, and then rehearse and perform it. **Recorder Ensemble** is an elective that is available to these students as well; in this rigorous, exciting mixed-age class, they study classical music, work on reading music, and perform a number of times throughout the year. Choral singing is an option: in **Serious Singers**, students practice vocal harmony as they learn songs from a variety of musical traditions; while singing, they also learn important ensemble skills and breathing technique. **Sound Tech** is another curriculum available to some Grade 6 students. In Tech, children learn how to use and maintain our sound equipment in the auditorium and the Music Room, and they run our performances by being a Soundboard Operator or a member of the Backstage Crew. Children have many opportunities to share their work in front of an audience, no matter what instrument they play; stage presence and learning how to perform effectively is a big part of the Grade 6 curriculum.

ART

The goal for Grade 6 is for students to express their importance in the world through projects that emphasize their ideas and power to change. Open Studio Times are available for students to come into the Art Center to work independently.

- M.C. Esher – rendering eyes realistically through observation;
- Faces – drawing the head inspired by graffiti artists Barry McGee and Margaret Kilgallen;
- Collage – investigating the work of Romare Bearden;
- Value in Value – group mural of a humanitarian hero;
- Sewing – recycled patchwork grocery totes;
- Self Portraits – painting of inspired by the work of Kehinde Wiley; and
- Clay – pottery wheel and hand building techniques.

DRAMA

Grade 6 Drama curriculum is called the **Improvisational Theatre Project**. ITP begins the year with improvisation, moves to scene work from plays and ends in a rehearsed scene from a play or a one-act play. The class challenges students to continue to hone their improvisational skills. Collaboration, respect, receiving and deep listening are essential skills that students learn through exercises and games. Our improvisational work builds on principles of various acting techniques. As the year progresses, the students will learn how to apply these principles of acting to their individual character and scene work.

The Mead School **Light Tech** program is multi-year program with the main goal being that each tech student will learn and have experience in all aspects of theatrical backstage and lighting production. Students will learn stage management skills, how to program and run a lightboard, as well as how to use and run a spotlight. The Mead School tech student takes on the responsibility of all backstage and technical aspects for the productions on our main stage.

STEAM

Students in Grade 6 are exposed to STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art & Mathematics) activities daily, through hands-on interactive, multi-disciplinary experiences in the classrooms and outdoors, but also during dedicated exploration time and elective classes in the STEAM lab.

TRIPS

Bonding Trips are integral to the experience of a Mead School student. Every year, during the fall semester, students in Grades 6-8 go on an overnight canoe/camping trip along the Connecticut River. Experienced guides, along with Mead School faculty chaperones, facilitate the canoe expedition, help students set up tents, engage them in outdoor education, games and food preparation.

During the 2nd semester, 4-8 Grade students and faculty leave for a multi-night Bonding Trip. Trips alternate yearly between City Tours and outdoor winter education. Students will either visit major metropolitan areas (recent years have included Philadelphia, Washington, D.C., and Boston) or alternate with a trip to the Berkshires during February for 3 days of outdoor environmental education. Older students are there to guide the younger students on these trips, with the goal of forging new friendships, stretching comfort zones, getting to know teachers in a more personal way, and of course, having fun!

GRADE 7

OVERVIEW

Seventh grade students begin to refine the skills they developed in early middle school. They are increasingly aware of themselves and their role in their community. Developmentally, children are now craving independence and increased responsibility. To accomplish these developmental goals, children are provided opportunities to practice advocating for their needs and organizing their schoolwork. Teachers provide active support, yet students given every opportunity to accomplish their work independently. Classes focus on the power of each individual to become active and accountable for their learning. To understand their power, children are encouraged to know themselves and establish their confidence. They then use this confidence to achieve their academic, social and emotional goals.

LANGUAGE ARTS

Grade 7 Language Arts further develops in students an appreciation for written language. Students now actively deconstruct the ideas and techniques of writers. Students refine their abilities to:

- Competently employ mechanics (grammar, punctuation, spelling, and vocabulary), and develop self-editing skills with 70% accuracy;
- Practice writing in various styles (expository and narrative, formal and personal, poetry); imitate writer styles to appreciate those techniques;
- Employ critical thinking skills to identify inference and nuance, reach deeper levels of meaning to text, and analyze literary elements;
- Translate critical thinking into the formal rhetoric argument essay;
- Use various note-taking methods, layout, and organization, including proper highlighting and annotating, effective use of post-its for quick notation;
- Consistently apply optimal learning situations for self, based on their learning style and needs; develop personal learning strategies, study techniques, and habits of mind;
- Appreciate literature and the power of the written word; and
- Display confidence in both written and verbal expression.

Guerilla Grammar - In addition to active practice of learned grammar by applying it to their writing, direct grammar instruction is also taught through a class called *Guerilla Grammar* where students become fluent with the different jobs in a sentence, such as direct/indirect objects, predicate nouns/adjectives, appositives, noun/adverb/adjective clauses, and verbals. Students also explore different sentence constructions, manipulating words, phrases, and clauses to craft the most articulate sentence possible.

Word Voyage, an online program focusing on root meanings and word cousins, challenges students to develop a rich and varied vocabulary and practice proper grammar and usage.

Texts may include: *Home of the Brave, The Odyssey, The House on Mango Street, The Rock and the River, Before We Were Free, The Crucible, Our Town, Between Two Rivers, Of Mice and Men* and *The Outsiders.*

MATHEMATICS

The primary thrust of the **Mathematics** program at this level is *fluency*. Fluency is the term we use to describe an individual who can perform skills and solve problems efficiently (i.e., with speed and accuracy) *without teacher support*. Students in Grade 7 will be working toward fluency across a range of middle school math or pre-algebra concepts appropriate to their readiness and personal goals. A short descriptive list of concepts for each curriculum is provided here for your information. *FIRST IN MATH* (FIM) is an online tool we use for math facts assessment, self-guided practice and math enrichment. Texts include *Hart McDougal Mathematics, Visible Learning.*

Math 7:

- Demonstrate automaticity with whole number and integer facts;
- Use efficient strategies when working with rational numbers in any form;
- Apply understanding of ratios, rates, percentages and proportional reasoning to solve real-life problems, such as those relating to consumer needs;
- Use unit rates and dimensional analysis techniques to convert between units of measure (any to any);
- Solve problems using algebraic expressions and equations that define the relationships between variables;
- Investigate population sampling methods and draw inferences from data;
- Find probabilities of compound events;
- Create scale drawings and use geometry tools appropriately; and
- Solve problems involving angle measure, compound area, surface area and volume.

Pre-Algebra:

- Extend number sense and computational techniques to handle exponents, square roots, LCM and GCF concepts;
- Express relationships and patterns using variables, expressions and algebraic equations;
- Solve fraction and decimal equations;
- Work flexibly with percent, ratio and proportion;
- Analyze and summarize data - bar, line, pie, box-whisker; statistical analysis;
- Data analysis and graphing (algebraic) - number lines, scatter plots, linear regression;
- Extend geometry concepts and skills to transformations on the coordinate plane;
- Operations with polynomial expressions ;
- Probability (e.g.; Counting Principle, theoretical vs. experimental, independent & dependent events); and
- Critical Thinking (e.g.; introduction to deductive reasoning, problem-solving strategies).

SCIENCE

The Grade 7 and 8 Science curriculum follows a biennial format; one year is Physics and the next is Chemistry.

Grade 7 and 8 **Physics** introduces students to basic physical science laws and concepts and examines them in depth. In class, cooperatively taught with the math department, we work on putting the laws of Physics into the context of our daily lives, and discover how math can be used to explain and predict the things we study. Concepts are introduced during class, and are worked with in lab. Labs and projects challenge the students' investigation and problem-solving skills and encourage them to use each other as resources. Weekly homework prepares students for, or reinforces, weekly topics. Notetaking, data recording, and formal lab reports are emphasized to help students hone their skills of clear written expression.

The first trimester project covers the topics of gravity & laws of motion, through the theme of "egg safety." An "egg drop" project is held at the end of this term. Simple machines are covered in the 2nd trimester. During the 3rd trimester students use the information learned during trimester 2 to design and build a compound machine that accomplishes a given task, and write a paper explaining how the concepts relate to the working of their machine.

Grade 7 and 8 **Chemistry** introduces students to basic chemistry laws and concepts. The class uses both traditional laboratory equipment and chemicals, and everyday items and foods. We also cover the methods scientists use to conduct careful research. The concept of the week is introduced in class and worked with in lab. Weekly homework prepares students for, or reinforces, weekly topics, or gives students the opportunity to interpret their lab findings. Subjects covered include: atoms, elements, bonds, compounds; physical properties of substances; chemical reactions; scientific method. In the winter trimester the class researches natural dyes, and in the spring we study the chemistry of food and cooking.

ESPAÑOL

The Grade 7 Español course will cover the book *¡Avancemos!1*. It is a challenging curriculum that is taught inductively through, for example, the audio material of the book, readings and role playing, but also deductively through drills, guided activities, and group activities. Projects play an important role and are chosen in accordance with the interests of the class in order to instill a love for learning the language and the culture. Students describe and celebrate the traditions and festivities important in the Hispanic culture. A weekly quiz and quarterly tests are given, and homework is assigned on weekdays, as needed. At the end of the year, students will be able to understand and participate in structured conversations, write short responses in Spanish, make linguistic and cultural connections and comparisons, speak in past tenses, formulate basic questions to solicit opinions, and gather information.

SOCIAL STUDIES

The Grade 7 and 8 Social Studies curriculum on Social Justice follows a biennial format; one year is Immigration, and the next is Civil Rights.

Immigration is an investigation to understand the *experience* of immigration and the issues surrounding

it. To frame this investigation, we ask the essential question: *"What are the social justice issues in the immigration experience?".* Students begin the year by defining social justice, ands then begin the study of the current issue of political refugees. This focus begins through the summer reading, which may include *Home of the Brave,* the story of a Sudanese refugee resettling in America, and Aruna Kenyi's memoir, *Between Two Rivers.* We investigate the challenges of refugees, their transition to a new country, and the United Nations' statistics of refugee numbers, etc. We move on to an overview of U.S. immigration history through the treatment of Chinese and Irish immigrants to this country beginning in the mid 1800's. In our third unit, the students explore the controversial topic of border crossings through an investigation of migrant workers who have crossed our border from Mexico. The course culminates with students taking the current United States Citizenship exam. The textbook for the course is prepared by the Social Studies faculty, drawing upon primary source documents and selections from the text *U.S. Immigration Policy in an Unsettled World*, prepared by The Choices Center, Watson Institute for International Studies, Brown University. We also reference articles from periodicals, newspapers and magazines.

In the **Civil Rights** curriculum, students learn about the Voting Rights issue within the Civil Rights Movement. Our essential question in this curriculum is *"What constitutes Social Justice and how does change happen in America?"* The study begins with the summer reading, which may include the book *Revolution* by Deborah Wiles. Focusing on two historical voting rights moments, Freedom Summer and the Selma March, students investigate the many different components involved in analyzing issues of social justice. The textbook for the course is prepared by the Social Studies faculty, drawing upon primary source documents and selections from the text *Freedom Now: The Civil Rights Movement in Mississippi,*prepared by The Choices Center, Watson Institute for International Studies, Brown University. Special activities include a reenactment of a Voter Registration experience from that period; a research project focusing on the use of primary source documents; an oratory project; and a study of the sources of Oppression, Power, and Privilege.

VALUES

Students meet once a week with their Home Center Director to set and reflect upon personal and group goals, work on collaboration and team building skills through activities and group discussions. Learning to work together fosters as sense of trust and understanding in the group, and permits authentic, deeper conversations on age-appropriate developmental topics as the year progresses. These activities also help students continue to foster a sense of self, and enable them to apply this knowledge as they approach their work and interactions with others in the community in an empathetic, respectful and genuine manner. A set curriculum is enhanced with topics of particular interest to the students, and can be generated from a personal request, current events, and coming of age. Separate conversations for boys and girls are sometimes held so that critical gender-specific discussions can be held more comfortably.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

The Physical Development curriculum consists of four areas: Team Sports, Beginner Fitness, Team Building Activities and New Sport Exposure to emphasize overall Healthy Lifestyle patterns. As in all curriculum areas, each child's learning is observed in relation to Mead's Seven School Skills: TO THINK, TO INTUIT, TO IMAGINE, TO RECEIVE, TO ACT, TO EXPRESS, TO RESPECT.

Team Sports - The primary objective of this activity is to allow each child the opportunity to experience being a member of a team. Practicing individual and group skills and learning to face the challenges of game situations are important aspects of this experience. Soccer, basketball and softball are offered as the primary sports with games scheduled against other schools our size. All students have the opportunity to participate in games. Game Rules, Sportsmanship, Fair Play and “doing your best” are highly reinforced.

Beginner Fitness - Classes offer a unique opportunity for students to work on coordination, agility, balance, cardiovascular endurance and muscle strength using their own body weight. Hand-eye and foot-eye coordination, movement, spatial awareness, force, energy, anatomy and physiology will all be learned through Beginner Fitness. Individual challenges are presented. These classes will help students learn how the body can create force to control speed and strength while pushing themselves to limits they never knew they could. Confidence may be built in a way they’ve never experienced.

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New Sport Exposure - This will be a great opportunity for students to experience new sports. Some sports that will be implemented include: Volleyball, Badminton, Cricket, Cross Country and more traditional sports like Flag Football and Hockey. Students will be able to try sports that they never have before while applying skills learned through previous Physical Development experiences.

MUSIC

In Grade 7, students have the option of taking **Advanced Winds and Horns**, in which students in their third year of instrument study go into more depth in their learning of the flute, clarinet, saxophone or trumpet; they play more difficult pieces, achieve greater fluency, and develop crucial ensemble skills. The Grade 7 Music curriculum also features **Rock Band**, in which students focus primarily on piano, guitar, drums, and vocals; these students study popular music, pick a song to learn, and then rehearse and perform it. Grade 7 students have the opportunity to take songwriting; in this class, they study song structure, and they learn to create original melodies and lyrics that are meaningful to them. **Recorder Ensemble** is an elective that is available to these students as well; in this rigorous, exciting mixed-age class, they study classical music, work on reading music, and perform a number of times throughout the year. Choral singing is an option: in **Serious Singers**, students practice vocal harmony as they learn songs from a variety of musical traditions; while singing, they also learn important ensemble skills and breathing technique. **Sound Tech** is another curriculum available to some Grade 7 students. In Tech, children learn how to use and maintain our sound equipment in the auditorium and the Music Room, and they run our performances by being a Soundboard Operator or a member of the Backstage Crew. Children have many opportunities to share their work in front of an audience, no matter what instrument they play; stage presence and learning how to perform effectively is a big part of the Grade 7 curriculum.

ART

The goal for students in Grade 7 is to refine their skills while working towards individual goals, conceptual thinking and self-expression. There are two elective classes offered each trimester for the students to choose from. One class being pictorial and the other hands on physical building. Open Studio Times are available for students to come into the Art Center to work independently.

Elective Offerings

- Drawing- a study in drawing techniques where students learn to draw what they see through a variety of approaches;
- Sculpture - build forms in space through through a series of project that study artist work;
- Painting - A history of painting through movements of the 20th century;
- Push Carts – Small groups work together to design, build and race their carts through a variety of tracks;
- Video - Storytelling through the short film. Students compose, act, film and edit a variety of shorts, working individually and through group work;
- Set Design – design and construct theatre sets for the Shakespeare Play;
- Fashion - Design and sew garments. The class culminated with a fashion show;
- Photography - learn how to build a pinhole camera, take pictures and develop them in a darkroom;
- Quilting – students make their own quilt while investigating a variety of sewing techniques;
- Textiles - A survey of textile design and techniques throughout the world; and
- Ceramics - pottery wheel and hand building vessels and objects.

DRAMA

Grade 7 and 8 students Drama curriculum follows a biennial format. One year the students are offered **Actors and Directors**, and the alternate year the students participate in our **Shakespeare** Program.

Actors and Directors is an advanced theatre workshop. This class concentrates on the fundamentals of acting and directing. From there, we will concentrate on the comprehensive examination of the character and script analysis. The introduction to classic dramatic literature, which is age-appropriate, will provide a basic introduction to the history of theatre as well. We will begin with the fundamentals and move into scene work taken from both plays and musicals. This class will help the students understand how important it is to bring a playwright's vision to life and that the art of theatre is a tool for society to learn about itself.

The **Shakespeare** program is a multi-faceted experience. In the fall trimester, the students meet once a week for a focused Shakespeare class. First, we will explore Shakespeare's personal life, the history of the time of his writings from 1589-1613, and the English language of the period. Then, we will investigate in depth the play that has been chosen until students feel not only comfortable, but also fully versed in the elements of this play and the language of the text, as well as the issues and themes presented in the play. Students will then form their own interpretation of this play, developing and personalizing the play's themes in order to demonstrate their understanding of the play. From there, the students begin the play production

process. They audition for parts, get cast in their roles, begin to rehearse starting at the end of the fall trimester for approximately eight weeks, choose production jobs including: set design, props design, costume design, lighting design, stage management and publicity. Starting at the beginning of the winter trimester, the students are simultaneously rehearsing for the play and building all the aspects of production. Finally, at the end of the winter trimester, students will present their production which brings to life our collective vision of the play.

Alongside the **Shakespeare** curriculum, the grade 7 and 8 students participate in a **Conditioning** class. **Conditioning** is designed to enhance their Shakespeare experience by helping them to realize their verbal and nonverbal expressive potential, and to, in turn, strengthen performance skills. It is imperative for students to be able to recognize their bodies as essential instruments in the craft of acting so that they can effectively communicate purpose, feeling and intent to the audience. Students learn basic mindful meditation techniques to work on relaxation. Students will participate in exercises for vocal projection and articulation using Kristin Linklater, Edith Skinner and Kate Fitzmaurice techniques. Students will also participate in exercises focusing on increasing strength, flexibility and stamina, as well as improving alignment and posture through the use of yoga and the Alexander Technique. As the class progresses, they will “try on” movement characteristics to help enhance character portrayal a technique coined Viewpoints and the Suzuki Method of Acting. All of these techniques combined together will provide them with tools to use not only on stage but also in their everyday life.

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STEAM

Students in Grade 7 are exposed to STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art & Mathematics) activities daily, through hands-on interactive, multi-disciplinary experiences in the classrooms and outdoors, but also during dedicated exploration time and elective classes in the STEAM lab.

TRIPS

Bonding Trips are integral to the experience of a Mead School student. Every year, during the fall semester, students in Grades 6-8 go on an overnight canoe/camping trip along the Connecticut River. Experienced guides, along with Mead School faculty chaperones, facilitate the canoe expedition, help students set up tents, engage them in outdoor education, games and food preparation.

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GRADE 8

OVERVIEW

Eighth grade students begin to master the skills they developed throughout middle school. They are now aware of themselves and their role in their community. Developmentally, children now thrive on increased independence and personal responsibility. To accomplish these developmental goals, children are provided increased opportunities to practice advocating for their needs, organizing their schoolwork and demonstrating their learning in complex fashions. Teachers provide active support, yet students are expected to accomplish their work independently. Classes focus on the power of each individual to become active and accountable for their learning. To understand their power, children are encouraged to know themselves and establish their confidence. They then use this confidence to achieve their academic, social and emotional goals.

Finally, eighth grade students must complete a series of individualized projects to meet graduation requirements at the end of the year. The Graduation Ritual encapsulates a series of challenges that lead up to Graduation: Mastery Challenge, Reflection Essay, Reflection Piece, and Graduation Ritual Panel. It is a valuable and rewarding tradition that requires students to synthesize different elements of their education at Mead and reflect upon how they have grown, both personally and academically.

THE GRADUATION MASTERY

The Graduation Mastery is our graduates' capstone project. This project is likely the most challenging process a Mead student will experience. It is also perhaps the most significant in solidifying a sense of academic confidence and independence in our students.

Expectations are held higher than ever:

- Students must stay in dialogue about the evolution of their project and process;
- Students must be able to articulate the steps taken throughout; and
- Students must be prepared to answer a wide range of questions during their Graduation Mastery Panel.

THE FOUR COMPONENTS

I. Personal Reflection Piece

Individually, students must create something that symbolizes themselves and their growth at Mead. Whether or not a student has been here for two or ten years, the personal reflection is meant to illustrate how each student has grown and changed during their tenure at Mead. The personal reflection piece can take the form of art, drama, dance, writing or music. Over the years, students have chosen all of these forms. Students must be prepared to speak and answer questions about their work in front of the Graduation Mastery Panel, comprised of The Head of School, The Home Center Director, The Director of Admissions, The Mastery Challenge Teacher, The Graduation Ritual Facilitator

and each student's Support Person. They also complete an Artist's Statement that accompanies their reflection piece.

II. Reflection Essay

All students write a formal essay that describes how they see themselves at this time, the direction they wish to proceed in life as well as how they have woven the seven school skills into their learning. The essay includes the students' understanding of their strengths and weaknesses as a learner and what they think the impact of these qualities will be on their future education. Additionally, students must identify what they believe has been the most meaningful contribution to their development at Mead. As with the personal reflection piece, students are expected to discuss their essay with the Graduation Mastery Panel.

III. Curriculum Area Mastery Challenge

Students select a subject area that is especially meaningful to them and, within it, the desired challenge through which to demonstrate mastery. The Home Center Director matches the student with the best Curriculum Director for that particular challenge. The Challenge CD creates the Mastery, along with the deadlines for each stage of the challenge. The student presents their challenge to the CD; it is the Challenge CD's responsibility to determine that the student has completed all requirements. Then, the student is asked to demonstrate and defend his/her Mastery Challenge before the Graduation Mastery Panel. At this time, the student also defends his/her Reflection Piece, Artist's Statement and Reflection Essay. No two challenges look alike, even within the same curriculum area, because the staff customize the challenge according to each student.

IV. Graduation Mastery Panel

Each student meets with the Graduation Mastery Panel to present and defend his/her Reflection, Essay, Reflection Piece, Artist's Statement and Mastery Challenge. The Panel is prepared to pose questions about the work presented and the personal process involved. The student receives feedback from the Panel. Lasting approximately one hour, the Panel engages each student in a rigorous discussion about the work presented. Once the Mastery is approved by the panel, the student is approved for graduation.

LANGUAGE ARTS

Grade 8 Language Arts focuses on practicing how to "*read like a writer, and write like a reader,"* meaning that students use the analytical eye of a writer when reading literary texts and write with the reader's perspective in mind at all times. Students are expected to:

- Self-edit mechanics issues (grammar, punctuation, spelling, and vocabulary) with 80% accuracy;
- Practice writing in various styles (expository and narrative, formal and personal, poetry); imitate writer styles to appreciate those techniques;
- Identify inference and nuance, reach deeper levels of meaning with ever-increasing sophistication of

text, and analyze literary elements;
- Translate critical thinking into the formal rhetoric argument essay;
- Use various note-taking methods, layout, and organization, including proper highlighting and annotating, effective use of post-its for quick notation;
- Consistently apply optimal learning situations for self, based on their learning style and needs; develop personal learning strategies, study techniques, and habits of mind;
- Appreciate literature and the power of the written word; and
- Display confidence in both written and verbal expression.

Direct grammar instruction is replaced with actively practicing "The Art of the Sentence". Students are challenged to find rich vocabulary choices and make every word do its job of conveying exactly what the writer intends.

Word Voyage, an online program focusing on root meanings and word cousins, challenges students to develop a rich and varied vocabulary and practice proper grammar and usage.

Texts may include: *The House on Mango Street, The Crucible, Our Town, Between Two Rivers, One Goal, Of Mice and Men*, *Hotel Between the Corner of Bitter and Sweet, Night, Whale Rider, To Kill A Mockingbird, Lord of the Flies, The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-time Indian,* and *I Am Malala.*

MATHEMATICS

The primary thrust of the Mathematics program at this level is *fluency*. Fluency is the term we use to describe an individual who can perform skills and solve problems efficiently (i.e., with speed and accuracy) *without teacher support*. Students in Grade 8 will be working toward fluency across a range of Pre-algebra, Algebra, Geometry concepts--and beyond--appropriate to their readiness and personal goals. *The prerequisite for Algebra 1 is successful completion of Pre-Algebra. The prerequisite for Geometry is successful completion of Algebra 1.* A short descriptive list of concepts for each curriculum is provided here. Texts may include *Hart McDougal Mathematics, Visible Learning, Algebra I and Geometry.*

Pre-Algebra:

- Extend number sense and computational techniques to handle exponents, square roots, LCM and GCF concepts;
- Express relationships and patterns using variables, expressions and algebraic equations;
- Solve fraction and decimal equations;
- Work flexibly with percent, ratio and proportion;
- Analyze and summarize data - bar, line, pie, box-whisker, statistical analysis;
- Data analysis and graphing (*algebraic*) - number lines, scatter plots, linear regression;
- Extend geometry concepts and skills to transformations on the coordinate plane;
- Operations with polynomial expressions;
- Investigate probability concepts - Counting Principle, theoretical vs. experimental, independent & dependent events; and
- Exposure to critical thinking situations involving multiple "correct" answers, exposure to deductive reasoning techniques, compare/contrast problem-solving strategy effectiveness.

Algebra 1:

- Confident use of variables, terms and algebraic expressions;
- Solve problems efficiently involving rational and irrational numbers;
- Investigate and problem solve with sets;
- Solve linear and nonlinear equations with two variables using a variety of methods;
- Create and interpret graphs of both linear and nonlinear functions in several forms;
- Extend data analysis & graphing skills - sampling, statistics, outliers, data regression and correlation coefficients;
- Efficiently solve problems involving rational and radical expressions; and
- Enhance critical thinking skills - increasing levels of abstraction, strategy choice(s), practice with deductive and inductive reasoning.

Geometry:

- Confidently use logical arguments, truth tables, direct and indirect proofs to problem solve;
- Build geometry foundation of definitions, postulates and theorems;
- Use parallel lines and transversals to solve problems and construct congruence proofs;
- Efficiently use triangle properties and theorems to solve problems involving congruent and similar polygons;
- Extend and enhance methods of calculating perimeter, area of polygons;
- Construct coordinate proofs and perform transformations in a 2D plane;
- Extend understanding of circles to calculate angles, length, and area involving arcs, secants, and tangents;
- Investigate right triangle geometry and confidently apply the Laws of Sines and Cosines to solve problems;
- Investigate Non-Euclidean concepts (*time permitting*); and
- Extend critical thinking skills to non-trivial problem-solving using up to three different proof types.

SCIENCE

The 7th and 8th grade science curriculum follows a biennial format; one year is Physics and the next is Chemistry.

Grade 7 and 8 **Physics** introduces students to basic physical science laws and concepts and examines them in depth. In class, cooperatively taught with the math department, we work on putting the laws of Physics into the context of our daily lives, and discover how math can be used to explain and predict the things we study. Concepts are introduced during class, and are worked with in lab. Labs and projects challenge the students' investigation and problem-solving skills and encourage them to use each other as resources. Weekly homework prepares students for, or reinforces, weekly topics.

The first trimester project covers the topics of gravity & laws of motion, through the theme of "egg safety." An "egg drop" project is held at the end of this term. Simple machines are covered in the 2nd trimester. During the 3rd trimester students use the information learned during trimester 2 to design and build a

compound machine that accomplishes a given task, and write a formal paper explaining how the concepts relate to the working of their machine.

Grade 7 and 8 **Chemistry** introduces students to basic chemistry laws and concepts. The class uses both traditional laboratory equipment and chemicals, and everyday items and foods. We also cover the methods scientists use to conduct careful research. The concept of the week is introduced in class and worked with in lab. Weekly homework prepares students for, or reinforces, weekly topics, or gives students the opportunity to interpret their lab findings. Subjects covered include: atoms, elements, bonds, compounds; physical properties of substances; chemical reactions; scientific method. In the winter trimester the class researches natural dyes, and in the spring we study the chemistry of food and cooking.

ESPAÑOL

The Grade 8 Español course covers the first five chapters of *¡Avancemos!2*, including a short review of the skills acquired in the previous year. The successful completion of this course will allow the students to enter Spanish 2 in High School. During the course of this year students will be asked to continue practice on skills such as reading, speaking, writing and listening, and they will be exposed to a variety of mediums in order to help them reach the proficiency level required to enter Spanish 2. This is also a year to go more in depth of the students' knowledge on famous Hispanic artists and their influence in the world. Artists will be chosen in accordance with the class' general interests. Students describe and celebrate the traditions and festivities important in the Hispanic culture.

A weekly quiz and quarterly tests are given, and homework is assigned on weekdays, as needed. Students are expected to turn in homework diligently at the beginning of class on the due date. Students describe and celebrate the traditions and festivities important in the Hispanic culture. At the end of the year students will be able to participate in spontaneous conversations, write a complex paragraph, express and argue their opinions and gather information on topics on which they have studied the vocabulary, use the Subjunctive mode, the Preterite, the Future and the Conditional.

SOCIAL STUDIES

The Grade 7 and 8 Social Studies curriculum follows a biennial format; one year is Immigration, and the next is Civil Rights.

Immigration is an exploration of the *experience* of immigration. To frame this investigation, we ask the essential question: *"How can we understand another's experience?".* Students begin the year studying the current issue of political refugees. This focus begins through the summer reading, which may include *Home of the Brave,* the story of a Sudanese refugee resettling in America, and Aruna Kenyi's memoir, *Between Two Rivers.* We investigate the challenges of refugees, their transition to a new country, and the United Nations' statistics of numbers of refugees, etc. We move on to an overview of U.S. immigration history by investigating the treatment of Chinese and Irish immigrants into this country beginning in the mid 1800's. In our third unit, the students explore the controversial topic of border crossings through an investigation of migrant workers who have crossed our border from Mexico. The course culminates with students taking the current United States Citizenship exam. The textbook for the course is prepared by the Social Studies

faculty, drawing upon primary source documents and selections from the text *U.S. Immigration Policy in an Unsettled World*, prepared by The Choices Center, Watson Institute for International Studies, Brown University. We also reference articles from periodicals, newspapers and magazines.

In the **Civil Rights** curriculum, students learn about Social Justice through an investigation of the Voting Rights issue within the Civil Rights Movement. Our essential question in this curriculum is *"What constitutes Social Justice and how does change happen in America?"* The study begins with the summer reading, which may include the book *Revolution by Deborah Wiles.* Focusing on two historical voting rights moments, Freedom Summer and the Selma March, students investigate the many different components involved in analyzing issues of social justice. The textbook for the course is prepared by the Social Studies faculty, drawing upon primary source documents and selections from the text *Freedom Now: The Civil Rights Movement in Mississippi,*prepared by The Choices Center, Watson Institute for International Studies, Brown University. Special activities include a reenactment of a Voter Registration experience from that period; a research project focusing on the use of primary source documents; an oratory project; and a study of the sources of Oppression, Power, and Privilege.

VALUES

Students meet once a week with their Home Center Director to set and reflect upon personal and group goals, work on collaboration and team building skills through activities and group discussions. Learning to work together fosters as sense of trust and understanding in the group, and permits authentic, deeper conversations on age-appropriate developmental topics as the year progresses. These activities also help students continue to foster a sense of self, and enable them to apply this knowledge as they approach their work and interactions with others in the community in an empathetic, respectful and genuine manner. A set curriculum is enhanced with topics of particular interest to the students, and can be generated from a personal request, current events, and coming of age. Separate conversations for boys and girls are sometimes held so that critical gender-specific discussions can be held more comfortably.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

The Physical Development curriculum consists of four areas: Team Sports, Beginner Fitness, Team Building Activities and New Sport Exposure to emphasize overall Healthy Lifestyle patterns. As in all curriculum areas, each child's learning is observed in relation to Mead's Seven School Skills: TO THINK, TO INTUIT, TO IMAGINE, TO RECEIVE, TO ACT, TO EXPRESS, TO RESPECT.

Team Sports - The primary objective of this activity is to allow each child the opportunity to experience being a member of a team. Practicing individual and group skills and learning to face the challenges of game situations are important aspects of this experience. Soccer, basketball and softball are offered as the primary sports with games scheduled against other schools our size. All students have the opportunity to participate in games. Game Rules, Sportsmanship, Fair Play and "doing your best" are highly reinforced.

Beginner Fitness - Classes offer a unique opportunity for students to work on coordination, agility, balance, cardiovascular endurance and muscle strength using their own body weight. Hand-eye and foot-eye coordination, movement, spatial awareness, force, energy, anatomy and physiology will all be learned through Beginner Fitness. Individual challenges are presented. These classes will help students learn how the body can create force to control speed and strength while pushing themselves to limits they never knew

they could. Confidence may be built in a way they've never experienced.

Team Building - Through team formatted activities, students will learn the importance of working in a team environment including how to cooperate with others and how to compromise to get to a goal. Adaptivity and creativeness will be widely used to reach activity goals and to learn how to solve issues in more than just one manner. Positive reinforcement and encouragement among peers will be reiterated. Team competition will be present, as well as reaching goals as an entire class. Elimination games, such as Dodgeball, will not be held!

New Sport Exposure - This will be a great opportunity for students to experience new sports. Some sports that will be implemented include: Volleyball, Badminton, Cricket, Cross Country and more traditional sports like Flag Football and Hockey. Students will be able to try sports that they never have before while applying skills learned through previous Physical Development experiences.

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