



EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

2024-25 SCHOOL YEAR

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ABOUT BGA

Battle Ground Academy is an engaging, dynamic independent pre-K4 through 12th grade school located in Franklin, Tenn., serving all of Williamson County and much of greater Nashville. An educational leader in the area for 136 years, BGA offers academic challenge, ignites intellectual vigor, and develops integrity, honesty, and character in our students.

An accredited independent school, BGA has the flexibility to adjust our curriculum to meet each student where they are—academically and personally—and welcome them into a community of challenge, support, acceptance, and warmth. BGA receives no government funding and is not affiliated with any religious, social, or other educational organization.

OUR MISSION

The mission of Battle Ground Academy is to ignite and nurture student curiosity, intellect, and character.

OUR VISION

Battle Ground Academy provides a transformative educational experience, empowering bold and deep thinkers, equipping compassionate and engaged citizens, and preparing thoughtful and brave leaders to step into their futures and make a positive impact in our communities.

A LETTER FROM THE HEAD OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Curiosity plays a central role in early learning at Battle Ground Academy.

Early childhood is a remarkable time of growth, and children’s natural curiosity takes center stage. Each day, young children ask hundreds of questions, evolving from simple “What’s that?” to deeper “Why?” and “How?” inquiries. By the time children reach preschool, they’re eager for explanations and determined to understand their world. Our role as educators is to provide the time, space, and resources for them to explore, ask big questions, and discover answers.

These early years are a unique window for profound learning, as children’s brains are developing rapidly. At BGA, we embrace this critical stage by fostering holistic growth—cognitive, social, emotional, lingual, and physical—within an environment where every child feels known, loved, and valued. We nurture not only a love for learning but also a heart for others and a sense of social responsibility.

Our inquiry-based approach is woven into every aspect of our academic programs. In literacy, we integrate evidence-based methods that encourage young learners to become reflective thinkers and expressive communicators. Our Singapore math program develops flexible thinkers and problem solvers, while our hands-on science and engineering curriculum fosters curiosity through topics like life sciences, coding, and robotics. Through social studies, children engage meaningfully with the world around them, fostering a deep connection to their communities.

We are committed to nurturing lifelong learners who are not only academically prepared but also empowered to take ownership of their personal growth. By encouraging a sense of agency, we help students develop resilience, empathy, leadership, and responsible citizenship, both inside and outside the classroom.

At BGA, we celebrate the joy and wonder that make learning an exciting journey. Through curiosity-driven exploration, we aim to instill a passion for discovery that will last a lifetime. By providing the tools for critical and creative thinking, we empower our students to become thoughtful, engaged citizens ready to make meaningful contributions to the world.

Thank you for entrusting us with this special journey in your child’s life.

Warm regards,

Rhonda Bennett, Ed.D.

Head of Early Childhood Education

PROGRAM GUIDE

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Our early childhood education program is structured to shepherd students through a dynamic continuum of learning where each stage progressively builds on the last. From exploratory beginnings to the mastery of essential skills, children develop in a structured yet flexible environment that supports their growth at every level.

As students move from one stage to the next, the complexity and depth of their learning increase, allowing them to build a solid foundation while preparing them for more advanced academic and personal challenges. Our approach is holistic, addressing cognitive, social, emotional, lingual, and physical development with a focus on curiosity, engagement, and independence.

- **EARLY LEARNING** - Threes, Pre-Kindergarten, and Junior Kindergarten focus on play-based, exploratory learning that helps children develop foundational academic, social, emotional, lingual, and physical skills while nurturing a love of learning.
- **PRIMARY GRADES** (Senior Kindergarten – Grade 2) emphasize developing literacy and numeracy skills, critical thinking, and social skills through inquiry, purposeful development, and deliberate opportunities for independence and collaboration.
- **INTERMEDIATE GRADES** (Grades 3 – 4) advance students’ skills in problem-solving, reasoning, collaboration, and independent learning, developing self-advocacy and preparing them for future academic challenges.

EARLY LEARNING PROGRAM

WHERE CURIOSITY MEETS PLAY

THREES, PRE-KINDERGARTEN, JUNIOR KINDERGARTEN

Early Learning at BGA begins with threes, Pre-Kindergarten, and Junior Kindergarten in an academic program that values learning through inquiry. Through the thoughtful coupling of hands-on exploration and systematic instruction, students develop both a strong academic foundation and a robust set of problem-solving skills. This is all part of a carefully crafted curriculum that aims to ensure children are meeting milestones and tracking toward kindergarten readiness across all learning domains.

The early childhood program is characterized by learning experiences incorporating curiosity and intentional play. During this period of development, children benefit from opportunities to sharpen gross and fine motor skills, emerging literacy and numeracy skills, social-emotional development, and the mindsets and habits of learners. Our approach to literacy teaches children the nuts and bolts of the English language through systematic phonological awareness while cultivating a love of reading and writing. In math, students explore big thinking with small numbers, establishing a solid foundation in numeracy. The Early Learning Center offers academic programs and mindsets aligned with the primary program. One leads seamlessly into the other as educational and social skills build in complexity.

Our early learning program is designed to be a joyful and engaging experience where children are encouraged to explore, inquire, and discover. We focus on creating a safe, nurturing environment that fosters social-emotional growth, creativity, and foundational academic skills.

LEARNING APPROACH: Our preschool curriculum is play-based and encourages curiosity and exploration. It was developed under the pretense that every child has innate strengths to be celebrated and growth opportunities to be explored.

KEY AREAS OF DEVELOPMENT:

- **COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT:** Introducing early literacy and numeracy concepts through systematic and explicit instruction, stories, games, exploration, and hands-on activities; high-interest science concepts and community exploration incorporate curiosity and intentional play

- **CREATIVE EXPRESSION:** Engaging in art, music, dance, and drama activities to stimulate imagination and self-expression
- **LANGUAGE:** Developing expressive language skills to help children verbalize wants, needs, and ideas in healthy social interactions; refining receptive language skills to help children understand what is being communicated to them so they may engage positively in everyday activities such as play and learning experiences.
- **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT:** Enhancing fine and gross motor skills through physical play and movement-based activities; outdoor experiences that combine physical expression with sensory input, authentic opportunities to strengthen hand skills and dexterity
- **SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL SKILLS:** Building relationships, regulating emotions, developing empathy, and fostering independence

These key areas of development come to life in our classrooms through engaging, hands-on learning experiences that encourage curiosity, creativity, and critical thinking. Each day, students are immersed in activities that integrate literacy, numeracy, motor skills, and social-emotional growth in ways that are both joyful and purposeful. Our inquiry-based approach allows children to see how different learning domains are naturally connected, and they apply their developing skills in real-world contexts. One recent classroom theme, centered around apples, illustrates how we bring our curriculum to life through dynamic, cross-curricular experiences.

Students learned to follow recipes. They created apple spice play dough, apple hand pies, and apple sauce from scratch. They measured, mixed, poured, and then practiced sequencing three or more steps by retelling how they made their creation.

Students practiced hand skills and dexterity. They chopped apples, smashed apple playdough, explored apple pie sensory bins, and labeled the parts of an apple with their best phonics skills.

Students created their own apple recipes and even made a class recipe book.

Students saw that each learning domain is inherently connected. They read fiction and non-fiction texts about apples, measured apples with snap cubes and with counting bears on a scale, learned the life cycle of an apple tree, and identified the parts of an apple. They graphed which apples they liked best and explored apple recipes from multiple cultures. Seeing one theme through multiple lenses created meaningful cognitive connections.

Students contributed to a celebration of learning. They shared their learning with an authentic audience – their families! This involved retelling, public speaking, and thinking about how to present information to an audience.

PRIMARY GRADES

LAYING THE FOUNDATION FOR LIFELONG LEARNING

KINDERGARTEN THROUGH SECOND GRADE

In the primary grades, we continue to build on the foundation set in preschool by integrating inquiry-based learning with the development of core academic skills. This stage of education focuses on nurturing children's budding confidence and their rapidly growing abilities as readers, writers, and mathematicians. Through a responsive approach to literacy and mathematics instruction, we meet children where they are, guiding them toward mastery of foundational skills.

LITERACY

The primary literacy program builds a foundation of key mindsets, habits, and skills in emergent and early readers and writers. Understanding that all learners need different experiences to grow, our literacy program is tailored to the high expectations of our school community and responsive to the needs of individual learners.

Systematic, explicit, and multisensory phonics instruction promotes phonological awareness, encoding and decoding skills, and fluency. Responses to literature support the target skill with a focus on strategies for decoding, fluency, comprehension, and vocabulary. Students learn to increase their stamina and practice habits of strong readers. Each classroom library includes high interest fiction and nonfiction texts that appeal to the curiosities and interests of children. Through direct instruction, small group guided instruction, and individual conferencing, children hone literacy skills

and practice target strategies as they become more confident and independent readers and writers.

In writing, a workshop approach creates a learning environment where children write for authentic purposes and audiences. Children become proficient writers by practicing strategies employed by authors. Powerful writers develop through direct instruction and ample opportunities to practice craft moves. Mini lessons incorporate grammar instruction and word study. Handwriting is explicitly taught - manuscript in kindergarten, first, and second grades with cursive introduced in second grade.

MATHEMATICS

The math program is founded on mathematical inquiry, conceptual understanding, flexibility, and problem solving. Students develop confidence through mastery and recognize the relevance of math in daily experiences. Central to the Singapore philosophy, concrete models and visual representations provide a structure for children to manage complexity that leads to algebraic thinking. This concrete-pictorial-abstract learning progression supports mastery of concepts through real-world, hands-on experiences. Children develop flexible thinking and a deep understanding of numeracy, base ten, operations, measurement, geometry, data analysis, and algebraic thinking.

SCIENCE/ENGINEERING AND SOCIAL STUDIES

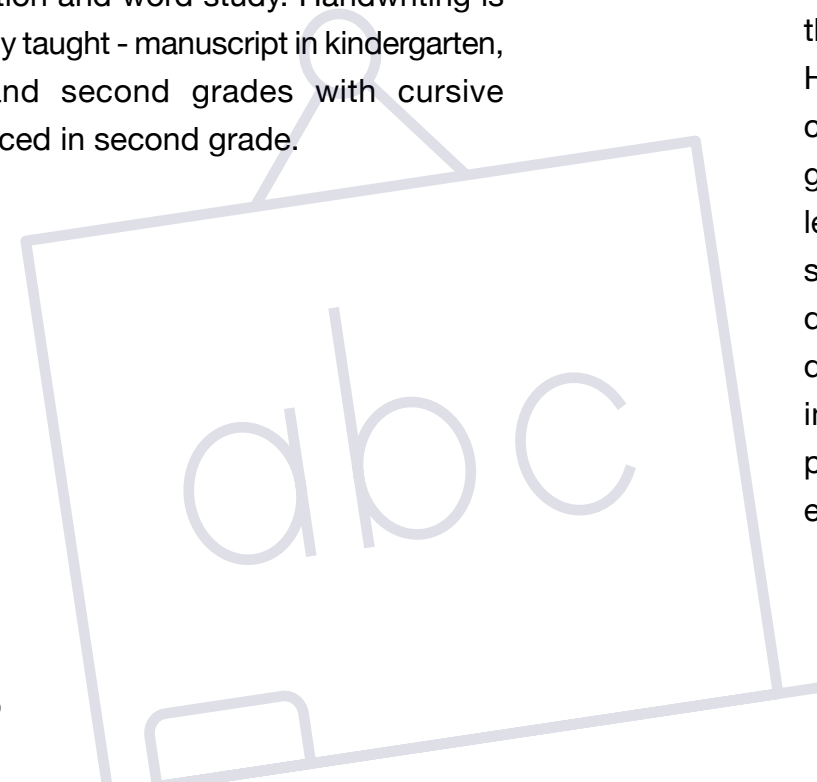
The primary program emphasizes the joy of discovery, as students engage in topics that encourage them to explore the world around them. Scientific inquiry and design thinking are vital elements of the program. Hands-on, inquiry-based exploration cultivates curiosity as we prepare the next generation of thinkers, innovators, and leaders. Children model engaged citizens, scientists, and engineers as they learn to question, imagine possibilities, plan and design, create prototypes, and reflect and improve their designs. Life, earth, and physical science studies are augmented by engineering, coding, and robotics in the lab.

Beyond academics, our primary program fosters empathy, leadership, and social responsibility through service projects and community engagement. These experiential learning opportunities, combined with the resources of our surrounding community, help students develop a strong sense of connection and purpose. We also focus on cultivating the mindsets and habits of scholars, encouraging children to approach learning with curiosity, resilience, and a growth mindset, thereby laying the groundwork for their future academic and personal success.

Primary students develop an understanding of citizenship by learning about matters relevant to our school, and they broaden their understanding by exploring their curiosities about our communities and our neighbors in Downtown Franklin.

SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING

Character education classes offer intentional opportunities to build character, though our values - character, scholarship, and excellence - reverberate throughout the school. Social skills, self awareness, and empathy are inherent in conversations as students learn to be good citizens. Service learning is an important component in developing a heart for others and social responsibility through service.



The skills and concepts introduced in the primary grades extend beyond the classroom, giving students opportunities to apply their learning in real-world contexts. Through hands-on, inquiry-based projects and beloved school traditions, children develop a deeper understanding of academic subjects while also honing leadership, communication, and problem-solving skills. These meaningful experiences, which blend creativity with collaboration, reflect the heart of our program and lay a strong foundation for future academic and personal success. Below are just a few examples of how students actively engage in these enriching opportunities.

- **BIG/LITTLE BUDDIES** – A special BGA tradition, where kindergarteners are paired with fourth-grade buddies. Throughout the year, they engage in activities such as recess, storytime, and sitting together at assemblies. A highlight is making gingerbread houses in December. This meaningful connection allows fourth graders to exercise leadership as mentors while creating lasting bonds with their kindergarten buddies.
- **KINDERGARTEN PARK DESIGNERS** – When the community needs a park, our kindergarten students are enlisted to help design it. They explore questions like, “What should be included?” and “Whose needs should we consider?” Working in teams, students collaborate on park designs and present their proposals. A final design is chosen, and students take on roles such as park planners, designers, and engineers. When possible, city leaders attend a ribbon-cutting ceremony where students share their process and unveil the new design, refining their collaboration and communication skills along the way.
- **FIRST GRADE MARKETPLACE** – Main Street – In this civics unit, students learn about Downtown Franklin’s Main Street and the goods and services offered by local businesses. They then create their own Main Street in class, complete with businesses providing goods and services they believe are essential. Students learn economic concepts like supply and demand, create marketing plans, and design products or services in small business groups. The marketplace is showcased at the Exhibition of Learning, with profits donated to a charitable cause chosen by the students.
- **SECOND GRADE PROBLEM-BASED UNIT** – Second graders tackle the authentic problem: “How can we enhance our playground to offer more engaging play opportunities?” Students conduct action research by surveying local playgrounds, including their own school playground. Using the engineering design process, they create new playground designs based on surveys and feasibility studies. Teams work through iterations, learning through trial and error, and ultimately present their final designs, supported by data, to an authentic audience.

INTERMEDIATE GRADES

EXPANDING HORIZONS, DEEPENING SKILLS

GRADES 3 - 4

The intermediate program is designed to extend students’ academic skills while fostering greater independence, critical thinking, and collaboration. Building on the foundation set in earlier years, intermediate students engage with more complex tasks, develop advanced literacy and mathematics skills, and delve into deeper comprehension and analysis as they become more powerful and confident learners.

LITERACY

A comprehensive literacy approach fosters high student engagement through experiences that develop proficiency in reading, writing, speaking, and listening. This approach encourages children to be reflective thinkers, expressive communicators, and thoughtful readers and writers. Explicit instruction in word study and comprehension strategies covers a range of genres as children read, analyze, and make connections with increasingly complex texts. Intermediate students increase stamina for reading, and they employ the techniques and strategies of proficient readers.

In writing, a workshop approach creates a learning environment where students write for authentic purposes and audiences. Students become powerful writers by practicing strategies employed by authors. In this evidence-based instructional design, teachers model an explicit strategy that students practice in small groups,

partnerships, and independently. These lessons incorporate grammar instruction and word study in the context of authentic writing. Teachers provide feedback and coaching to help students hone their writing skills to meet their goals. Writing in intermediate grades becomes progressively more complex and is reflective of student voice through narrative, persuasive, and expository writing.

MATHEMATICS

In intermediate grades, mathematics instruction introduces more complex concepts grounded in logical reasoning and problem-solving. Building on the primary foundation of numeracy, fluency, and base ten concepts, intermediate mathematicians solve multi-step problems of increasing complexity using visual models. The Singapore approach promotes mathematical inquiry, flexible thinking, and confidence through mastery, emphasizing mathematics concepts in authentic experiences. Central

to the philosophy, concrete models and visual representations provide a structure for children to manage complexity that leads to algebraic thinking. With flexible thinking and mathematical problem solving as the central focus of this framework, a concrete-pictorial-abstract learning progression supports mastery of concepts through real-world, hands-on experiences. Children develop mathematical thinking and a deep understanding of conceptual meaning in addition to procedural knowledge and skills to solve authentic problems.

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING, AND MATH

The STEM program is inquiry-based, involving investigations into life, earth, and physical sciences, as well as engineering, coding, and robotics. Scientific inquiry and engineering design are vital elements of the program. Hands-on, inquiry-based scientific exploration cultivates curiosity as we prepare the next generation of thinkers, innovators, and leaders. Children model scientists and engineers as they learn to question, imagine possibilities, plan and design, create prototypes, and reflect and improve their designs.

Opportunities abound to extend learning beyond the classroom. Outdoor gardens serve as an on-campus laboratory for life and earth science. Field experiences, such as the Corvette Museum and Mammoth Cave, offer in-depth and authentic experiences in physics and earth science.

SOCIAL STUDIES

The social studies program reflects an inquiry-based approach to learning about communities, cultures, civics, history, geography, government, and global citizenship. Students are engaged as they think critically and collaborate to solve problems presented through authentic experiences. Students in intermediate grades tackle the tough issues faced by governments and cultures in a diverse society.

Students develop strategic thinking skills as they analyze challenges in the local or global community, consider various approaches and perspectives, and identify effective solutions. Entrepreneurial characteristics like creativity and persistence are fostered as children identify problems, investigate solutions, and build product prototypes or pinpoint services to solve problems. Students hone their oral and written communication skills as they present their findings to community members.

The focus on mindsets and habits of scholars encourages resilience, accountability, collaboration, and presentation skills, with opportunities for students to engage in creative projects such as “Shark Tank”-style presentations, enhancing both their academic and interpersonal abilities.

Character education continues to be a central component, emphasizing leadership, empathy, perspective-taking, and ethical decision-making as students prepare for the next stages of their academic and personal journeys.

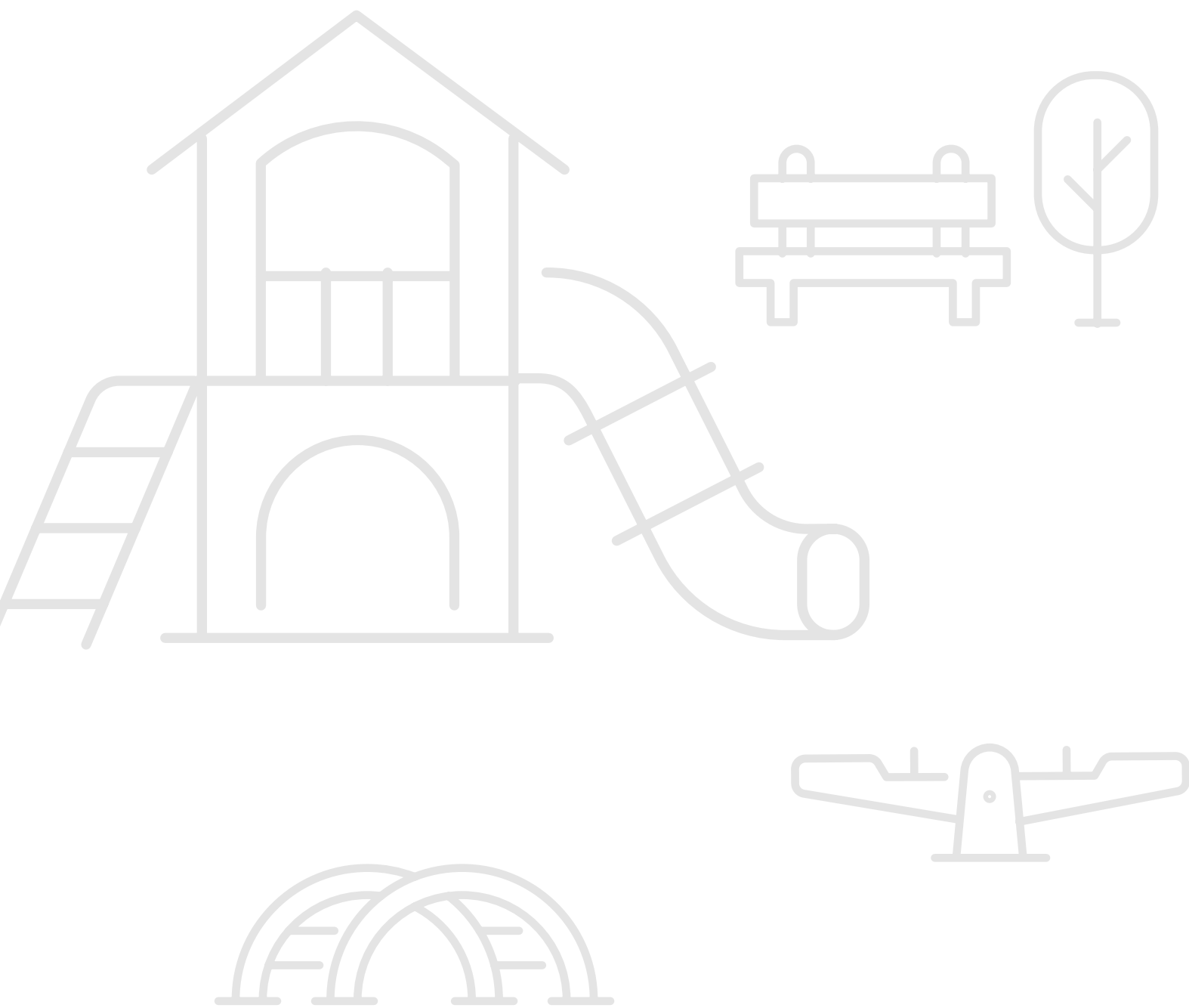
The Intermediate Grades Program at BGA not only deepens students’ academic skills but also provides dynamic, real-world opportunities to apply their learning in meaningful ways. Through hands-on projects, collaborative problem-solving, and inquiry-based experiences, students

develop critical thinking, creativity, and leadership. These projects allow students to connect their classroom learning with the world around them, preparing them for the next stages of their academic journey. Below are a few examples of how these key concepts come to life in the classroom.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS:

- **FOURTH GRADE ENTREPRENEURIAL PROJECT** This interdisciplinary project challenges students to think like entrepreneurs. Working in teams, they identify a problem within the school or community, conduct research, and collaborate to design a product or service that addresses the issue. Through the design thinking process in the STEM lab, students develop business and marketing plans, iterating on their ideas to refine solutions. Partnering with Upper School students in the Entrepreneurial Leadership capstone, fourth graders receive mentorship and feedback to strengthen their project proposals. The teams then present their final pitches in a Shark Tank-style forum to a panel of school and community leaders. The project culminates in the Exhibition of Learning, where students share their experiences and growth with an authentic audience.
- **BGA BALLOON PARADE** Our annual robot parade, inspired by the book *Balloons Over Broadway*, offers a fun and educational twist on the famous Macy’s Thanksgiving Day Parade. Students create scaled-down versions of parade floats, balloons, or bands using Ozobots, Dash robots, or LEGO robots. Taking place in the gym, this event allows students to code their robots to navigate the parade route, blending design thinking, STEM learning, and creativity. Students not only gain hands-on experience with robotics and coding but also engage in artistic expression as they design their floats and balloons. The project fosters teamwork, problem-solving, and public presentation skills as students showcase their creations for parents, teachers, and classmates.
- **EXHIBITION OF LEARNING** In social studies, students are investigating real-world challenges, working collaboratively to develop creative solutions. The Exhibition of Learning provides an opportunity for students to present their final projects and share the insights and discoveries they made throughout the process. The day begins with kindergarteners showcasing their engineering skills through their water trash collectors, designed to remove trash from ponds without removing water. First graders follow by hosting an interactive market, offering goods and services like baked items, coffee, and even valet parking for toy cars. Afterward,

second graders display their architectural talents by presenting designs for new Lower School playgrounds, complete with zip lines and jungle gyms. Third graders then explore local government and democracy by creating their own towns, complete with buildings and ordinances. Finally, the day culminates in the fourth graders' entrepreneurial showcase, where they pitch their business ideas to an authentic audience. It's a true celebration of creativity, problem-solving, and student-led learning.



CO-CURRICULAR PROGRAMS

Our co-curricular programs complement the academic curriculum, providing opportunities for students to explore their interests, develop new skills, and express themselves creatively.

- **VISUALARTS:** The art program offers exploration of various media and creative processes while establishing a strong foundation in visual art. Each child's unique creative expression will be recognized, encouraged, and supported through projects that explore various forms of mediums while considering art of the past and present. While celebrating their individuality, children achieve personal confidence that fosters positivity throughout their lives. The art studio cultivates an environment where curiosity and creativity thrive, and children develop original expression.
- **MUSIC:** The music program is a child-centered, energetic, and engaging instrumental and vocal program that provides opportunities for children to create, perform, respond, and connect through musical elements. The diverse repertoire of music and activities include singing, playing instruments, reading and writing music, arranging, improvising, dramatizing, and active listening. Music nurtures the whole child, fostering creative and critical thinking skills, collaborative teamwork, self-discipline, emotional maturity, and self-expression. Opportunities are designed to encourage a lifelong love of music.
 - ✦ **PRIMARY**
Singing, playing musical instruments (i.e. xylophones, percussion), reading music, creating music, exploring music in the context of history and culture, analyzing and describing music.
 - ✦ **INTERMEDIATE**
Singing, playing musical instruments (i.e. recorder, ukulele, xylophones, percussion), reading music, creating music, exploring music in the context of history and culture, analyzing and describing music.
- **WELLNESS:** The wellness program focuses on developing physical fitness, fostering positive attitudes about physical activity and athletics, and building a foundation for a healthy lifestyle.

This holistic approach combines motor skill development, body management, balance and flexibility, nutrition, and overall fitness that benefits all students. Fundamental manipulative skills, such as throwing, catching, dribbling, and kicking, are incorporated into developmentally

appropriate activities, and the values of teamwork and good sportsmanship are emphasized. Children learn the importance of physical fitness and wellness while engaging in healthy, physically active lifestyles.

✦ **PRIMARY**

Foundation for lifelong healthy habits; fitness; locomotor skills; non-locomotor skills; body management, balance and flexibility; fundamental sports skills; good sportsmanship; nutrition and illness prevention

✦ **INTERMEDIATE**

Foundation for lifelong healthy habits; fitness components: aerobic capacity, muscular strength, muscular endurance, flexibility, body composition; sport-specific skills; rhythmic competency; social skills; good sportsmanship; nutrition and illness prevention

- **SPANISH LANGUAGE:** The Spanish program is a language acquisition model that balances Spanish language proficiency with cultural competency. Students develop an enthusiasm for learning language, appreciating cultures, and recognizing global perspectives. The Spanish curriculum develops the skills of listening, speaking, reading, writing through conversations, visuals, movement, songs, and games.

✦ **PRIMARY**

Students are introduced to the target language and culture. Songs, games, and movement maintain student interest in an engaging class.

✦ **INTERMEDIATE**

Students practice the target language by listening and speaking. Instruction includes varied teaching methods, such as conversations, visuals, movement, songs, and games. Students are assessed based on the World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages and will achieve novice level proficiency by 4th grade.

- **CHARACTER EDUCATION:** Character is one of our three core values, and nurturing character in our students is a key part of our mission. Daily integration of character lessons promote values such as empathy, respect, perspective-taking, and responsibility while nurturing a caring heart in service to others.

- **LIBRARY PROGRAM:** The library/media program encourages a love of reading, appreciation for literature, and digital literacy skills. Basic research skills are introduced using a variety of print and digital resources. Destiny, our web-based online catalog, allows students to access the library collection as well as online resources from school or home.

✦ **PRIMARY**

Primary grades enjoy a designated library class and opportunities to check out books during flexible library times.

✦ **INTERMEDIATE**

Intermediate grades have a designated library class and a media class where they hone digital literacy skills through collaborative projects that combine information, media, and technology skills with digital citizenship.

