



Phonics and Reading

K-2

The Lower School's approach to teaching reading is a multisensory, structured, systematic, and explicit program with a documented research base. Our program thoroughly teaches foundational skills of print concepts, phonological awareness, phonics, and word study. This ensures that all students gain strong foundational skills. Teachers use a multisensory approach to build fluency and confidence, ensuring that students master these key concepts. Rooted in the belief that children are capable of reading to learn *while* learning to read, the Lower School uses Geodes as their readable texts. Geodes are a collection of accessible, knowledge-building books for emerging and developing readers. Geodes are "readable texts" because, with specific decoding strategies coupled with explicit instruction in vocabulary and content knowledge, they are accessible to students with emerging reading skills. While written for emerging and developing readers, the books provide an authentic reading experience that builds content knowledge about science, history, and the arts, fostering intellectual curiosity.

3-5

In every instance, students are encouraged to choose books based on interest, a vital part of our independent reading philosophy. Students read books from a classroom library designed to meet the needs and interests of a wide range of students. Many of these books are decodable, in order for students to practice the skills taught within the classroom. We want our students to read books that matter to them, where their motivation to read is driven by natural curiosity and the development of individual skills and talents. Weekly trips to our school library, and a dedicated school librarian enhance the skills being built in the classroom.



The Orton-Gillingham method uses a combination of visual, auditory, and kinesthetic activities. Our trained tutor uses structured and systematic sessions that are organized in a clear, sequential manner. We start with the basic 3-part drill and gradually move to more complex reading skills, ensuring your child builds a solid foundation. Each child is unique, and tutoring is tailored to meet their specific needs. This personalized approach allows your child to learn at their own pace and focus on areas where they may be struggling. Our Orton-Gillingham trained tutor works closely with contracted Occupational Therapists and Speech Language Therapists to provide a holistic plan for students who need support beyond the classroom.



Math

Lower School math is problem-based, focused on the development of number sense and habits of mind that build confidence when encountering open-ended problems that demand thinking and communication. In accordance with the Singapore Math methodology, we hold to the belief that students need to understand the way numbers work together before they tackle abstract mathematical concepts. We also believe that the means to mastery must always be based on problem-solving.

A SMALL SAMPLE OF LEARNING GOALS INCLUDE:

K-2

Beginning students focus on counting, ordering, and writing numbers to 20, decomposing numbers, and building patterns with shapes. They explore addition and subtraction word problems, model number bonds, and measure using nonstandard units. Students extend their counting skills to 120, add and subtract within 10, 20, and 100, and solve part-whole word problems. They work with money, data, and time, and learn to compose and partition shapes. In second grade, students count and compare numbers to 1,000, perform addition and subtraction fluently within 20, and solve word problems. They estimate and measure using both customary and metric units, multiply with repeated addition and arrays, and tell time to the minute. They also interpret and create graphs like picture graphs and bar graphs.

3-5

In fourth grade, students explore place value up to 10,000, adding and subtracting four-digit numbers, and multiplying and dividing 3-digit by 1-digit numbers. They solve word problems involving fractions, tell time to the minute, estimate mass and volume, and calculate perimeter and area of composite figures. They also collect and interpret data using various graphs, and explore geometric shapes, angles, and vertices. Advanced math students work with decimal operations to thousandths, volume, and fractional operations, including multiplication and division, along with measurement conversions. Fifth-grade students build on these concepts with more complex operations, including multi-digit multiplication, long division, and fraction operations with unlike denominators. Advanced fifth graders study area, unit rates, percentages, ratios, rational numbers, and dividing fractions, alongside data and distributions.



Humanities

K

Topics:

The five senses, once upon a farm, America then and now, the continents

1

Topics:

A world of books, creature features, powerful forces, Cinderella stories

2

Topics:

A season of change, the American West, Civil Rights heroes, good eating

3

Topics:

The sea, Outer space, a new home, artists make art

4

Topics:

A great heart, extreme settings, the Redcoats are coming, myth making

5

Topics:

Cultures in conflict, word play, a war between us, breaking barriers

Students explore both classic and contemporary works, building a layered understanding of each topic. Visual art is woven into every module as a universal form of communication, accessible to even the youngest learners.



Science

Our instructional model employs a storyline approach, featuring a structured sequence of lessons driven by students' questions that emerge from their interactions with phenomena.

**SAMPLE UNITS
OF STUDY:**

KINDERGARTEN | Energy: Sunlight; Weather; Forces & Motion; Ecosystems

GRADE 1 | Waves: Light & Sound, Space: Sky Patterns; Animal & Plant Traits

GRADE 2 | Earth: Land Changing Shape; Structure & Properties of Matter; Habitats & Biodiversity; Plants

GRADE 3 | Forces & Interactions; Weather & Hazards; Trait Variations; Ecosystem Change & Survival

GRADE 4 | Energy Transfer: Collisions & Electricity; Earth Processes; Structure & Function

GRADE 5 | Ecosystems & Matter Cycling; Matter Properties; Earth Systems; Earth in the Universe



Performing Arts

Music instruction is integral to all areas of study in the Lower School. Research shows that music appreciation, fluency, and string instrument performance supports the development of cultural understanding, as well as mathematical thinking, problem solving, and extensive fine motor skill practice. Therefore, all Lower School students participate in a Music Performance class and Strings classes. In addition to performing in chapel all students are given several opportunities throughout the year to perform in class and on stage.



Visual Art

The Lower School Visual Arts curriculum includes the arts not as a peripheral part of the curriculum but as an essential part of the knowledge all children should learn in the early grades. Our objective is to foster creativity and promote confidence in the students' artmaking abilities. Students will gain a global awareness and cultivate an appreciation of visual arts throughout history. The curriculum is structured to build a strong art vocabulary, to provide exposure to a variety of media and techniques, and to create an exploratory atmosphere in which students may discover and develop their unique, creative voice.



Applied Learning

We define applied learning as an educational philosophy where “why” students are learning is the cornerstone of design. We value skills driving content and applied experience over rote pedagogy. We artfully craft curriculum with core competency development as the foundation of student learning acknowledging young adults who turn ideas into action will excel in the global marketplace and beyond.



SAMPLE OF APPLIED LEARNING UNIT

Kindergarten Community

In this kindergarten applied learning unit, students explore their local community by learning about various businesses and their roles. After visiting local businesses and interacting with employees, children choose a business to represent by dressing up as an employee. In the IDEA Lab, they collaborate to build and paint models of the chosen business using wood, nails, and paint. This hands-on experience fosters creativity, teamwork, and problem-solving, while helping students develop a deeper understanding of their community and the importance of different businesses.



SAMPLE OF APPLIED LEARNING UNIT

Second Grade Market

In the second-grade Market Applied Learning Unit, students explore how their community functions from economic, environmental, and civic perspectives. They begin by learning key economic concepts such as supply and demand and product design, engaging in design thinking to develop their own product ideas. With the guidance of upper school students, the second graders refine their ideas, considering factors like cost, materials, and sustainability. After creating their products, the students pitch their ideas and hold a market where members of the school community can purchase their creations. This hands-on experience teaches children how businesses operate, how communities support each other, and the importance of making environmentally responsible choices in product design.



Health & Wellness

Wellness class helps students build self-awareness in order to support and enhance their overall wellbeing. Students learn the specifics and importance of different breathing exercises, and the profound impact it has on their bodies. They are empowered through words and routines of affirmations in order to build self-esteem and confidence. Children learn how to ground and center themselves in the present moment through mindfulness practices. Students develop a strong relationship with the power of movement in order to enhance their physical activity and longevity. Students develop a tool they can utilize when self-doubt, stressful moments, and a lack of motivation set in within their learning experiences both inside and outside of the classroom.



IDEA Lab

Driven by the need to cultivate students who can tinker, create, and innovate in ways that are increasingly in demand in the global workforce, the IDEA Lab exists to foster innovation, creativity, and practical engineering skills. Focused on innovative, design-driven, and entrepreneurial applications, the IDEA lab prepares students for real-world challenges through hands-on, interdisciplinary learning experiences. The goal is to develop computational thinking and design skills that go beyond traditional screen-based activities, engaging students in practical, tangible work that builds essential skills for technology and engineering fields.



Physical Education

In PE, each student has many opportunities to practice activities, skills, and games. Just one component of a student's overall development, physical education provides poignant opportunities for students to develop in the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains. All Rabun Gap Lower School students participate in swim lessons and learn about safety in and around water. They also participate in conflict resolution skill practice, age appropriate health and fitness lessons, and social skills. The physical education program is designed to develop physically literate graduates who have the knowledge, skills, and confidence to enjoy a lifetime of healthy physical activity.



Social Emotional Learning

Our Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) curriculum is implemented by the Lower School Counselor and thoughtfully aligned with the American School Counselor Association's (ASCA) Mindsets and Standards, ensuring a comprehensive approach to developing essential life skills. Through engaging lessons and activities, our students explore core SEL competencies: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making. These skills are integral to helping children understand and manage their emotions, build positive relationships, and make thoughtful choices. By embedding SEL into weekly classroom lessons, we empower our students to become resilient, empathetic, and confident individuals. We believe that a strong foundation in social emotional learning not only enhances academic performance but also prepares children to thrive in all aspects of their lives.



RABUN GAP

RABUN GAP-NACOOCHEE SCHOOL

MISSION STATEMENT

Rabun Gap-Nacoochee School prepares young people for college, career, and a lifetime of leadership and service. In our beautiful mountain environment, we inspire students to grow in character, intellect, and spirit. We value educational accessibility and foster a community of learners whose diversity is honored and reflects the world.

CORE COMPETENCIES

Rabun Gap Students Value all (Cultural-Competence)

- We are a culturally competent community where every member belongs.
- We celebrate individual narratives while being challenged to see the world through multiple/pluralistic lenses.
- We are open-minded & willing to examine our biases, leaning into difficult trust building conversations.

Rabun Gap Students Inspire solutions (Critical-Thinking)

- We promote critical thinking and problem solving as the key to excelling in contemporary society.
- We develop diagnostic skills to promote solution based thinking.
- We ask questions leading us to inventive solutions for both local & global dilemmas.

Rabun Gap Students Grow their minds (Creativity)

- We passionately confront ambiguity with creativity, curiosity and imagination.
- We are applied, iterative problem solvers.
- We are courageous risk-takers understanding failure is the process of learning, not a roadblock for success.

Rabun Gap Students Honor the institution (Character)

- We are character driven embracing the ethos of our institution.
- We take responsibility when we err and aspire to improve moving forward in community together.
- We will embrace new opportunities as they arise.

Rabun Gap Students Prepare through teamwork (Collaboration)

- We realize we are stronger when collaborating together.
- We communicate openly with teachers and peers, assuming the best of others while navigating solutions.
- We think interdependently, leveraging all available resources to benefit our learning.

Follow Us!



www.rabungap.org