



PROGRAM OF STUDIES

August 2016

Dear Families,

Rising Tide Charter Public School (Rising Tide) offers a choice in public education to families. While Rising Tide has many components that families would expect in a middle and high school, there are also many unique aspects to the program at Rising Tide. Our school culture is centered around trust, honesty, respect and responsibility; our staff and students work together to create an environment that is safe physically, emotionally, and intellectually. Our teachers are devoted to creating the best education possible for all children, including those who have excelled in school as well as children who have struggled in school. At Rising Tide, our maximum class size is 23 students, and the adults work hard to know each child. In such an environment, we are able to focus our attention on teaching and learning, where students can develop the self-confidence to take risks, ask questions, and work to find solutions. Central to the identity of our school program is our approach to teaching and learning. At Rising Tide, we use an inquiry and skills-based approach, for both personal and academic growth.

The inquiry and skills-based approach is used to support personal growth by encouraging students to reflect, take ownership for their actions, and build skills to resolve conflicts. Questioning is at the heart of the inquiry and skills-based approach. When a challenging social or disciplinary issue arises with a student, the adult takes time to listen to and question the student about the situation. In this way, the student is given an opportunity to reflect upon the situation and is supported in the process of understanding and resolving the issue. Student mistakes are treated as teachable moments from which students may learn and grow. In a social or disciplinary setting, this approach encourages students to take responsibility, advocate for themselves, and develop an awareness of themselves and others.

The inquiry and skills-based approach is used to support academic growth by encouraging students to think critically and ask questions. Teaching and learning at Rising Tide is approached as a process of exploration rather than a reporting of information and memorization of facts. In an inquiry and skills-based classroom, teachers and students engage in meaningful questions and discussions, collect and analyze information, draw conclusions, and communicate an understanding of the material. The inquiry and skills-based approach is not limited to project-based learning; the approach may be used in posing challenges where direct skill instruction is taking place, such as working with a piece of literature, a mathematical pattern, or a scientific problem. In this academic environment, a teacher acts as a facilitator for student learning, encouraging and leading the questioning, listening and directing student discovery, and constructively critiquing for better understanding or development of skills. At Rising Tide, each student is acknowledged as a critical thinker who brings valuable prior knowledge and experiences to the classroom. Students are expected to be active learners, and teachers are expected to help students build skills as well as navigate and make sense of the world.

This Program of Studies provides an overview of the Rising Tide academic program. If you have questions, feel free to visit our school website, come to an informational Open House session, or call to schedule a tour.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jill S. Crafts". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jill S. Crafts
Head of School

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CURRICULUM AT RISING TIDE CHARTER PUBLIC SCHOOL

At Rising Tide, the faculty designs the curriculum. Teachers develop courses that reflect our school's philosophy, explore the central questions and ideas in each discipline, and align with state requirements.

The curriculum at Rising Tide is guided by our Mission and Goals and by the four Schoolwide Objectives listed on the following page. By the time each student graduates from Rising Tide, he or she should feel confident in his or her ability to be an effective Communicator, Investigator, Self-Directed Learner, and Community Steward. Teachers use these Schoolwide Objectives to set expectations, design teaching and learning activities, and assess student progress in all school-related activities. The Schoolwide Objectives and Benchmark Skills remain the same across grades levels; however, as students move into higher grade levels, they are expected to complete tasks with greater complexity, independence, and awareness. Additionally, each grade level has a guiding question, which the faculty uses to design teaching and learning opportunities and connect the work of school with the daily lives of students.

Each academic discipline has developed a Guiding Statement and a set of Essential Questions from which to design units of study. Each unit is designed to help students build skills, gain content knowledge, and develop understandings. This process of curriculum development has been strongly influenced by design frameworks such as those found in *Understanding by Design* (McTighe and Wiggins) and *The Teaching for Understanding Guide* (Blythe, et al.).

As a public school, we are required to align our curriculum with the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks. When designing units, teachers use the Frameworks to help determine what content knowledge and skills should be included when exploring a particular topic. Teachers collaborate to ensure that our courses are aligned with each of the Frameworks: Arts, English Language Arts, Foreign Languages, Comprehensive Health, Mathematics, History and Social Science, and Science and Technology/Engineering. The faculty also reviews the national frameworks for various academic disciplines when designing units.

Using Rising Tide's inquiry and skills-based approach, teachers have the flexibility and autonomy to teach the students in front of them, differentiating instruction to ensure that all students have opportunities for success. We provide a rigorous program in which all students are held to high academic standards. Courses at Rising Tide are not leveled, and we do not weight grade point averages or rank students.

Through our curriculum design and implementation, we foster the development of skills, the exploration of content, and the deepening of understanding. We believe that this approach fully prepares students for success on outside measures. Students in grades five through ten take the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS), and students in the upper grades are encouraged, though not required, to take the SAT Subject Area or the Advanced Placement exams. At Rising Tide, we are committed to preparing all students for college and beyond.

MISSION

The Rising Tide Charter Public School will provide a strong academic program rooted in the history of Plymouth, Massachusetts. Our students will harvest opportunity from the practice of language, the reasoning of mathematics, the analysis of science and the reflection of history. We want children to hone skills through rigorous studies, but skills alone do not make a whole education. The Rising Tide Charter Public School will also cultivate within its students a sense of belonging to our community, a tie with those who have come before them and a seed of continuity between the Plymouth of today and the Plymouth of tomorrow. The Rising Tide Charter Public School will graduate capable and prepared young adults who have already sown within themselves a sense of place and belonging that will be the bounty of the future, whether they remain among us or venture from our harbor.

GOALS

- To foster in each student a love of learning and high achievement through encouragement to continuously improve in the acquisition of basic skills through work on integrated projects that reflect life's real challenges.
- To create a safe, supportive environment where each person treats others with respect, and where a student can try new things and take risks without fearing teasing or failure.
- To encourage each student to grow and take increasing responsibility, both academically and socially.
- To create and develop in each student an awareness of the diversity both within and outside of the Rising Tide community and encourage tolerance, acceptance, and celebration of differences.
- To create a close community of students, teachers, parents and community members who work together to encourage students to develop into successful students and, later, into successful members of their local communities.

SCHOOLWIDE OBJECTIVES AND BENCHMARK SKILLS

Communicator

Receptive Skills
Expressive Skills

Investigator

Inquiry Skills
Innovation Skills

Self-Directed Learner

Self-Awareness Skills
Skills in Taking Responsibility

Community Steward

Skills in Awareness of Others
Collaboration Skills

GUIDING QUESTIONS

Overall: Who am I?

Grade 5: What is my place in the community?

Grade 6: How can I connect with others?

Grade 7: How can we face challenges?

Grade 8: How can we take responsibility for ourselves and one another?

Grade 9: How can we recognize and demonstrate courage?

Grade 10: How can we recognize and demonstrate integrity?

Grade 11: How can we be mindful of and prepare for the future?

Grade 12: What is my place in the world?

MIDDLE SCHOOL PROGRAM

Courses

The Middle School operates on a six-day, cascading block schedule, with four 60 minute blocks per day and one 90 minute block per day. Each core class meets five out of six days in the cycle, and there is an elective block at the end of each day. Additionally, students meet each day with their Advisory groups.

Grade 5

Communications & Investigations
English
Mathematics
Physical Education (one semester)
Science
Social Studies
Visual Art (one semester)

Grade 6

Communications & Investigations
Dance & Theater (one semester)
English
Mathematics
Music (one semester)
Science
Social Studies

Grade 7

English
Latin 1A
Mathematics
Physical Education (one semester)
Science
Social Studies
Visual Art (one semester)

Grade 8

English
Dance & Theater (one semester)
Latin 1B
Mathematics
Music (one semester)
Science
Social Studies

Elective Block

In the sixth period of the day, students participate in academic support, grade level Advisory curriculum, Discover, and Exposition. Some students may also participate in targeted academic assistance during this block.

Academic support time is scheduled twice a week for the entire year.

During the first term, students participate in the grade level Advisory curriculum two to three times a week. For the remaining terms, students participate in the grade level Advisory curriculum two to three times a month.

During the second and third terms, students participate in Discover courses that meet twice a week; in Discover courses, students build skills while exploring academic, artistic, and athletic topics.

During the fourth term, students participate in Exposition courses where they investigate questions on topics connected to our local community. Students explore topics such as agriculture, tourism, and ecology, conducting field work and developing their inquiry skills. The investigations culminate in a schoolwide exposition in which students share their findings or products with the school community.

UPPER SCHOOL PROGRAM

The Upper School operates on a six-day, rotating block schedule, with four 85 minute blocks per day. Courses meet on alternate days, and students have an expected course load of eight courses, including six core courses and two elective courses per semester. Additionally, students meet two to three times a week with their Advisory groups.

Graduation Requirements

Twenty-eight (28) credits are required for graduation from the Upper School at Rising Tide. Full-year courses are given one (1) credit. Semester courses are given a half (.5) credit. Each student must also pass the MCAS tests in high school English, Mathematics, and Science.

English 4 credits
Mathematics 4 credits
Science 4 credits
Social Studies 3 credits

World Languages 3 credits in one language
Arts 3 credits
Physical Education 2 credits

Grade 9

Arts: Theater Foundation (one semester)
Visual Art Foundation (one semester)

English I

Mathematics: Algebra I or Geometry

Science: Introductory Physics

Social Studies: U.S. History II in the World

World Languages: Latin or Spanish

Grade 10

Arts: Dance Foundation (one semester)
Music Foundation (one semester)

English II

Mathematics: Geometry or Algebra II

Science: Chemistry

Social Studies: Global History I

World Languages: Latin or Spanish

Grade 11

English III

Mathematics: Algebra II, Algebraic Functions & Trigonometry, Pre-Calculus

Science: Biology

Social Studies: Civics & Economics

World Languages: Latin, Spanish

Choice Block: Offerings in Arts, Science, Social Studies, World Languages

Grade 12

English IV

Mathematics: Algebraic Functions & Trigonometry, Pre-Calculus, Calculus, Applications of Probability & Statistics, Advanced Statistics & Programming

Science: Advanced Biology, Advanced Physics, Earth & the Environment

Choice Block 1: Offerings in Arts, Mathematics,

Choice Block 2: Science, Social Studies, World

Choice Block 3: Languages

In exceptional cases, a student may be offered an option for an Independent Study course if the student excels in a discipline, and the existing program offerings are not sufficient to meet the student's needs.

Elective Block

During the elective block, students participate in academic elective courses and fitness classes. Some students may also participate in targeted academic assistance during this block. Some seniors participate in the Senior Internship Course during this block.

Semester-long, academic elective courses offer students choice beyond the core program offerings. Elective courses either introduce students to or allow students to explore in greater depth topics, fields, or skills in a cohesive manner. A wide range of offerings have included courses such as Astronomy, Chamber Music, Computer Programming, Linguistics, Personal Finance, Poetry Workshop, and Psychology.

Seniors may, through an application process, participate in the Senior Internship Course, a community-based internship program during the elective blocks for one semester. Students gain career experience in a non-paid internship in a field of their choice, and meet regularly at school with a faculty member.

ACADEMIC DISCIPLINES

THE ARTS

The Arts in the Rising Tide curriculum represent a wide array of opportunities for students to further develop their communication skills and gain exposure to the many ways artists use various tools, techniques, and concepts to observe and creatively respond to life.

DANCE

Guiding Statement

The Dance program enriches and invigorates students physically, cognitively, and creatively, using movement as a springboard for investigation and as a modality of self-expression. Through the continued practice of dance, students can expect to improve their flexibility, coordination, rhythm, muscle memory, endurance, strength, and overall mind body connection. Students develop awareness of their individual bodies in space and in conjunction with the group ensemble to enhance kinesthetic awareness and spatial reasoning. Each course focuses not only on the technique and practice of particular styles, but also highlights pertinent historical and cultural connections through research projects and presentations. Tools to develop individual and group choreography aid in the development of the total artist. Most importantly, the dance program is guided by the intention of giving each student an outlet to experience joy through movement and to create meaningful connections to and through dance.

Essential Questions

- What are the benefits of a dance practice?
- Where can we find dance in everyday life?
- How can we use dance to broaden our understanding of human emotion, experience, history, and traditions?
- What tools do we use to create, critique, and refine choreography?
- What makes a great performer?
- What can we glean from watching various types of dance from different countries and time periods?
- What are the principles of various traditional dance techniques?
- What role does movement play in my own life?
- How can I contribute to the ensemble?
- How can we challenge ourselves to reach our fullest physical potential and performance ability?
- How can we use dance as a method of self-expression and communication?
- How can we achieve balance and prevent injury through the practice of dance?
- How can I design movement, independently and through collaboration?

Course Descriptions

Grade Six: Dance & Theater

In this course, students explore the genres of theater and dance, building basic skills and increasing their comfort in presenting and performing. Students learn the fundamentals of acting, creating theater and telling stories using their voice, body, and imagination. They also learn basic dance warm-ups, steps, and short combinations, completing across the floor work and choreographed dances. Throughout the course, students explore what it means to work as an ensemble, creating and performing tableaux and short scenes in groups and with partners. Students develop communication and critical thinking skills through presenting, performing, and completing regular written reflections.

Grade Eight: Dance & Theater

Students build upon their exposure to theater and dance and deepen their skills and experience with these genres. Students further explore voice and body work through Laban, Meisner, and other techniques. They investigate acting motivation, objective, and obstacle in preparing scenes and monologues to present and perform. Students explore different styles of dance, discussing dance history and participating in warm ups, across the floor steps, and choreography. Continuing to focus

on working as an ensemble, students create their own scenes utilizing props, fight choreography, and movement. Throughout the course, students practice critical thinking and textual analysis through reading and writing assignments and keeping a weekly journal.

Grade Ten: Dance Foundation

This introductory course is aimed to pique students' interest and develop their confidence in dance. Dancers will navigate their way through the course with the overall goals of developing a solid dance technique, gaining exposure to historical dances in America, and expressing themselves through their own choreography. Dancers investigate the technique and history of Jazz dance and learn several challenging phrases within this genre. They come to understand basic dance etiquette by ritualistically going through a rigorous warm up, across the floor, and final phrase section of class. Choreographic skills are introduced and put to work through individual, duet, and small group assignments. Through open discussion and personal journals, students are encouraged to track their unique experience and to draw connections between dance genres and information from other disciplines. The course concludes with a class-choreographed piece to present at the end of term showcase. Understanding of the rehearsal and performance process will be developed and assessed in this final culminating experience.

Upper School: Choreography

This course challenges students to create, rehearse, refine, and present choreography in a formal performance setting. Dancers learn how to design using AB, ABA, base phrase & remix, rondo, canon, storytelling, and narration methods. Dancers create movement using a variety of resources as a catalyst including but not limited to videos, poems, and current events. Students discuss safe and effective ways to constructively critique their own work as well as the work of their peers so that they can continuously enhance their signature work. The course concludes with a final presentation of a group work including student run costume design, program notes, and promotional materials. *Prerequisite: Dance Foundation*

Upper School: Contemporary Dance

In this course, dancers delve into modern, contemporary, and post contemporary techniques through practice and analysis. The course includes a modern based warm up utilizing the legacy of Cunningham, Horton, and Dunham techniques with an emphasis on floor work, release swing, the x, and other codifications. Dancers experience increasingly complex spatial and rhythmic patterns and movement sequences in order to advance their movement proficiency. Dancers are exposed to and critique current work in the form of excerpts, collaborative films, and live performances when possible. Dancers learn reconstructed and/or new repertory to be shared in a culminating performance. *Prerequisite: Dance Foundation*

Upper School: Jazz

In this course, students continue to build upon the proficiency in the Jazz Dance aesthetic that they developed in Dance Foundation. Students master technical skills including pirouettes, hitch kicks, stag leaps, fuetes, and sautes with beats. Students investigate both historical and modern key figures and pioneers who have helped to develop this genre of dance and are exposed to a range of styles from historical Broadway to more current Street Jazz. Students experimentally explore the essential questions, "What does it take to be in an ensemble?" and "How has American Jazz progressed over time?" The culminating project includes a full length piece to present to the school community. *Prerequisite: Dance Foundation*

Upper School: World Dance

In this course, students explore multiple styles of dance genres from around the world, including forms from South America, Africa, Asia, and Europe. They investigate essential questions such as "How are cultural values and norms expressed through dance practices from around the world?" and "How do our own current dance practices reflect our cultural values?" Additionally, students have the opportunity to uncover information regarding specific countries in which they have an interest through a long term research project. Performance opportunities conclude this course. *Prerequisite: Dance Foundation*

MUSIC

Guiding Statement

Music education should help to develop each student as a musician and an artist. Students gain knowledge of music history, instruments, and concepts, while developing the skills necessary to create, perform, and analyze music. Music education develops multiple intelligences and combines physical and cognitive skills often into one activity. Students not only learn to create their own music but also gain an understanding and appreciation of music and the arts. Through creating and analyzing music, students are able to experience the arts in a uniquely immediate and personal way.

Essential Questions

- How does music communicate and convey meaning?
- What are the tools that musicians use to communicate?
- How can we communicate music effectively through writing and performance?
- What is the purpose of music?
- How has music played a role in history?
- How does culture and environment shape music?

Course Descriptions

Grade Six

Students begin by discussing the definitions of fundamental music concepts such as beat, tempo, volume, and rhythm, exploring examples of these in and outside of music, and emphasizing the universality of these concepts. The class also discusses how these concepts can be used to communicate certain emotions and meanings, connecting to the essential question of how artists communicate through music. Students especially focus on pitch and how to combine pitch with rhythms onto the music staff, which is the conventional system used for reading and writing music. Students practice applying these concepts to composition, as well as to their playing skills and technique on instruments, particularly on a variety of percussion instruments such as drums and pitched percussion instruments such as glockenspiels. The class explores some influential artists throughout history, as well as the musical traditions of other cultures, continuing to emphasize the universality of essential music concepts, and connecting to the overall themes of creativity and communicating through music.

Grade Eight

In this course, students continue to develop their musical skills and knowledge on an increasingly advanced level. They continue to explore more complex rhythms, particularly syncopation, which are common in many musical traditions around the world. Students continue to focus on the concept of pitch and practice combining it with rhythms when composing on the music staff. Students utilize more advanced compositional techniques and apply concepts such as chords, arpeggios, tempo, volume, and texture, to communicate various emotions and meanings through their music. They are asked to compose music that tells a story and conveys the appropriate emotions, which connects to the overall essential question of how artists can communicate through music. Students explore the role that music has played throughout history, starting with the innovations and influence of great Classical music composers, as well as African American music and its role and influence on American music and history.

Grade Ten: Music Foundation

In this course, students explore the basic technical and conceptual aspects of music through the exploration of various musical genres. Students learn to apply their understandings of theoretical concepts such as harmonies, chord structures, progressions, and time signatures to their own musical compositions. Music Foundation provides students of all skill levels and experience with regular opportunities to practice and perform music with keyboards and other instruments using a variety of skills and strategies. In addition to providing a well-rounded introduction, this class encourages all students to make new personal connections with the art of music and establish an authentic place for music in their lives.

Upper School: Composition

In this course, students learn techniques to compose music and experiment with how different sounds, or combinations of sounds, communicate and express various emotions and ideas. Students explore topics such as melody, rhythm, harmony, counterpoint, and orchestration, and discuss how composers utilize these tools in their music. Students apply these concepts to several composition projects throughout the semester. *Prerequisite: Music Foundation*

Upper School: Jazz Exploration

Throughout this course, students explore the technical and conceptual aspects of a variety of styles from the rich history of jazz music. Students investigate how and why jazz evolved alongside other styles of American music and how its appeal and influence has spread worldwide. In addition to regularly listening to and reflecting on presented jazz works and continuing to expand their musical vocabulary, students have the opportunity to incorporate their understandings of jazz in their own original compositions. *Prerequisite: Music Foundation*

Upper School: Leitmotif

Music does not explicitly tell a story by itself, but it can be used to enhance a narrative through the use of devices such as leitmotif. A leitmotif is a recurring theme throughout a work that represents a person, place, event, or idea. In this course, two epics are used as case studies to explore the use of leitmotif: Richard Wagner's opera cycle *Der Ring des Nibelungen* and Howard Shore's score to *The Lord of the Rings* film trilogy. Students discuss specific scenes, analyzing the libretto/script, costume, set, acting, and photography to determine what is happening in the scene and its role in the larger story. Students then examine the music to determine its impact on the story. Students use the elements of music, including melody, harmony, texture, and orchestration to determine how music enhances the narrative on a micro and macro level. *Prerequisite: Music Foundation*

Upper School: Music Studio

Music Studio provides students the opportunity to learn new performance and composition skills in a workshop environment. Using keyboards as well as other instruments, students learn to play music while uncovering the various components used to create music, including chord structure and progression, melody, harmony, rhythm, and collaboration. Students continue to develop their composition and presentation skills by combining technical skills with musical knowledge to create and perform original musical pieces. This course provides challenges for students of all musical experience and skill levels. *Prerequisite: Music Foundation*

THEATER

Guiding Statement

The purpose of Theater education is to help students develop the skills they need to collaborate with others, demonstrate leadership in a variety of situations, communicate effectively, and be confident in their own creativity, knowledge, and identity as artists. Students need to work effectively as members of an ensemble or community, demonstrate support and observation skills as members of an audience, and give constructive feedback to others. Theater education provides the opportunity for students to work on understanding different perspectives through analyzing a variety of dramatic texts as well as writing their own. Students gain the courage to express their thoughts and ideas in an artistic way, learning the skills of self-assessment and revision throughout the rehearsal process. Students should demonstrate spontaneity and quick thinking, taking positive risks while exploring and developing a variety of characters. Theater education helps students to believe in the strength of their own creativity and share that creativity with the world.

Essential Questions

- Why is improvisation an important part of theater and life?
- How can actors portray believable characters and scenarios on stage?
- How do the physicality and movement of the actor affect the way an audience sees a character on stage?
- How important is facial expression in acting? How can I use my voice to its full potential?
- How can I prepare and perform a monologue?
- What makes a strong acting ensemble?
- How can we effectively rehearse for a performance?
- What makes a “good” scene?
- What makes a production successful?
- What is the role and responsibility of the director?
- What keeps an audience member engaged in a performance?
- How can we interpret the text of a scene or play?
- How and why do people write plays?
- What processes do playwrights use?

Course Descriptions

Grade Six: Dance & Theater

In this course, students explore the genres of theater and dance, building basic skills and increasing their comfort in presenting and performing. Students learn the fundamentals of acting, creating theater and telling stories using their voice, body, and imagination. They also learn basic dance warm-ups, steps, and short combinations, completing across the floor work and choreographed dances. Throughout the course, students explore what it means to work as an ensemble, creating and performing tableaux and short scenes in groups and with partners. Students develop communication and critical thinking skills through presenting, performing, and completing regular written reflections.

Grade Eight: Dance & Theater

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Grade Nine: Theater Foundation

This course explores theater for one semester. Through group projects, oral presentations, class discussions, scene work, reading and writing scenes and plays, performances, and other projects, students are able to make connections from the Theater and apply the new skills they learn to their own lives. The first unit of the course is devoted to theater games and improvisation designed to develop the performance skills of spontaneity, listening, and creating with a group. Students spend the second unit learning the fundamentals of acting by working on scenes from published plays, culminating in an in-class performance. The last unit is devoted to the production and public performance of a short play with the entire class.

Upper School: Acting

How do you portray a character realistically and believably on stage? In this course, students explore this question by acting in a variety of monologues, scenes, and improvisation activities. Throughout the semester, students work on both contemporary and classical texts in order to understand how to fully develop characters in many different styles of theater. At various times during the course, students also participate in mock auditions in which they receive feedback on their work and preparation. For students interested in Musical Theater, there is also an opportunity to work on songs and scenes from musicals. This is not a required part of the course but is available to students who are interested.

Prerequisite: Theater Foundation

Upper School: Experimental Theater

What is theater and how has a common understanding and definition of theater changed over time? In this course, students have an opportunity to explore various types of theatrical performances including self-scripted pieces, performance art, and other non-traditional staged performances. Experimental theater is trying something new, and through improvisation, acting and writing activities, and exploratory acting exercises, students challenge the way they have previously thought about theater. Students work individually and in groups to create, rehearse, and perform many experimental theater pieces throughout the semester. In this course, students should demonstrate a willingness to try new things and to use their voices to perform something unique that challenges the audience to explore its own definition of theater. *Prerequisite: Theater Foundation*

Upper School: Full-Length Production

What does it take to rehearse, produce, and perform a full-length play? In this course, students spend a semester exploring this question. The course begins with students reading a full-length play together. Then, the roles in the play are cast through auditions. During this process, students learn some basic auditioning and cold reading skills. Each student then also becomes a part of a technical team that will help work on all of the backstage elements of the production. Students gain an understanding of different roles in theater, both on and off-stage, while working on these elements. Acting skills learned in the Theater Foundation course are built upon as the ensemble tries to bring the full-length text and characters to life on stage. The remainder of the course is spent rehearsing and preparing the play for a public performance at the end of the semester. *Prerequisite: Theater Foundation*

Upper School: Playwriting and Production

What does it take to write and produce a 10-Minute play? In this course, students explore this question. During the beginning of the course, students learn about play structure and different techniques used by playwrights. We read a variety of 10-Minute plays as a class, and then students have the opportunity to write plays and submit them for production. A small number of these plays are selected to be produced and performed for a public audience. Students learn about the variety of roles and responsibilities both on and off stage when working on a play, and then they take on some of those roles. At the end of the semester, students perform original 10-Minute plays that are completely student directed, acted, technically designed, and produced. *Prerequisite: Theater Foundation*

VISUAL ART

Guiding Statement

Visual Art education empowers students to observe, break down, and reassemble visual elements, furthering their understanding of the physical visual world and providing students with the opportunity to develop ideas through multiple stages. Idea development is nurtured by giving students time for brainstorming and developing comprehensive sketches to ensure clear and convincing visual communication. Students' overall communication skills are strengthened through guided practice and experimentation and editing while working with the creative process. Students practice the skills of observation and critique, analyzing a variety of successful examples, in class and during museum visits. In Visual Art, fundamental concepts and skills are presented and mastered, empowering students to expand on them with a variety of multi-step projects.

Essential Questions, Technical

- What is an aesthetic vocabulary?
- How does a visual artist communicate convincingly?
- What are the tools and techniques used in successful visual communication?
- What does proficient mean? How is proficient different from effective?
- What are successful (drawing, building, etc.) habits?
- How does the brain process visual information / observed subjects?
- How do we take what we see (input) and portray / represent it (output) effectively?
- How does the space around subject matter define the shape of a form as much as the form itself does?
- How does / can the medium that an artist works in affect the conceptual outcome of the visual expression?

Essential Questions, Conceptual

- Why do we make art? What role does art play in my life?
- Does art reflect the world as it is? Does art reflect the world as it should be? Does art reflect the world as it could be?
- How do artists choose their subject matter?
- What is portraiture? Who is portrayed in a portrait? Why?
- In what ways can visual communication convey meaning more effectively (powerfully, conclusively, emotionally) than other forms of communication? What are the limitations of visual communication?
- What is the message that I'm trying to convey with my work? What is my artwork about?
- Who is the audience of my work? Who will receive my communication? What is my responsibility to them? How can my communication be strengthened?

Course Descriptions

Grade Five

This course focuses on establishing the core drawing, painting, sculpture, and compositional skills needed to present representational subjects accurately and with confidence. Students are given the opportunity to explore demonstrated techniques and experiment with a variety of drawing mediums such as graphite, oil pastel, and India ink in an encouraging and empowering classroom studio. Best practices and successful habits for visual representation are reinforced daily along with regular instructor demonstrations and regular opportunities to view and respond to the works of artists in group discussions. Additionally, students explore the conceptual side of art making and work to refine their communication skills both representationally and abstractly.

Grade Seven

This course builds on students' existing structural and observational drawing skills and their 2-D and 3-D compositional skills while expanding their visual communication skills through focused studio practice. Students begin with an in-depth exploration of perspective and the representation of spatial depth. Students first learn to accurately represent basic 3-dimensional geometric volumes using one and two-point linear perspective and then progress to increasingly complex forms. Additionally, students

examine the concept of visual contrast and light source within 2-dimensional compositions. Working with value-rich mediums such as charcoal, students learn practical approaches to rendering realistic forms with convincing highlights and shadows. The students' observational skills are strengthened through an introduction to life drawing with subjects ranging from still life to the human figure. Finally, throughout this semester course, students have regular opportunities to view and respond to the works of artists in group discussions and develop their aesthetic vocabularies.

Grade Nine: Visual Art Foundation

In this foundational course, students establish strong observational drawing skills using a variety of demonstrated techniques and media. With focused studio time, students are given the opportunity to apply the concepts of class to their compositions in an inspiring atmosphere. Students also maintain a sketchbook throughout the course that serves as both a place for skill building as well as a vehicle for concept development. Additionally, students explore and make connections with the works of historical and contemporary artists.

Upper School: Drawing

This course is a studio class designed for students who want to build upon the fundamental aspects of art production and focus specifically on the completion of two-dimensional work using charcoal, graphite, pastel, colored pencil, ink, and watercolor. Studio projects focus on the development of an advanced technical skill set and allow students an opportunity to explore a personal connection to their artwork. Specific projects are assigned and are general enough so that students can form their own approach to each assignment. Students are expected to exhibit an increasing level of responsibility and initiative in the completion of projects, and are the guiding force behind the ideas found in the work.

Prerequisite: Visual Art Foundation

Upper School: Painting

In this course, students apply observational drawing skills learned during Visual Art Foundation to establish strong observational painting skills. They explore color theory and become acquainted with the color properties of paint through a variety of assignments, demonstrated exercises, and paint-handling techniques. With focused studio time, students have the opportunity to apply the concepts of class to their compositions in an inspiring atmosphere. Students also maintain a sketchbook throughout the course that serves as both a place for skill building as well as a vehicle for concept development.

Additionally, students explore and make connections with the works of historical and contemporary artists. *Prerequisite: Visual Art Foundation*

Upper School: Portfolio Workshop

This course is offered to students who have a passion for visual art, along with a solid work ethic and the ability to be self-directed and motivated. Each student in this course generates a portfolio of work that best demonstrates his or her own conceptual and technical understandings, and considerable time is spent exploring what this looks like for each individual student. With guidance from the teacher, students choose the materials with which they work and are asked to develop a strong conceptual thread throughout their portfolio. *Prerequisite: Visual Art Foundation*

Upper School: Printmaking & Sculpture

In this course, students explore relief-block printing and subtractive sculpting. They develop a collection of their own work based on assigned thematic projects that stress advanced application of the foundational principles of Visual Art. Through regular critique of their work and extended self-directed studio time, students refine and focus both their technical and conceptual skills, producing work that represents their individual artistic strengths. Students take more responsibility for the conceptual goals of their work and continue their understanding of the technical aspects of art production. Students maintain a sketchbook throughout the course that serves as a place for skill building, concept development, and artist research. *Prerequisite: Visual Art Foundation*

COMMUNICATIONS & INVESTIGATIONS

Guiding Statement

Middle school is a crucial time to help students develop the fundamental skills and habits necessary to become resourceful individuals. Communications and Investigations (C&I) accomplishes these objectives and encourages students to think critically and become engaged members of their communities. The course focuses on literacy, numeracy, problem solving, and inquiry skills. Students practice close reading of nonfiction texts and work to hone their expository writing, discussion, and public speaking skills. Students are presented with engineering design challenges, tackling authentic problems and learning to analyze data and create realistic solutions. Using their knowledge of basic mathematics to understand banking and personal finance, students develop financial literacy skills. The multidisciplinary nature of this course helps students to make connections and apply their learning to relevant personal experiences, while helping students develop skills they will use in other courses and throughout their lives.

Essential Questions

- How can we best understand what others are communicating with us?
- How can we effectively communicate so that others understand us?
- How can we actively and creatively solve problems?
- How can we be resourceful individuals?
- How can we develop social responsibility?

Course Descriptions

Grade Five

In each unit, students practice literacy skills, through reading and marking nonfiction texts, data analysis skills, through reading graphs, charts, maps, etc., and communication skills, through writing and speaking. In each unit, students also work to identify problems or challenges and design creative solutions. Some units of study include cranberries and their connection to the local community, community space design, money and banking, how to live a healthy lifestyle, and composting and water filtering. Students also focus on computer technology skills, such as typing, media literacy, and responsibly navigating the internet.

Grade Six

Students continue to focus on skills related to literacy and problem-solving. They pay particular attention to public speaking skills, delivering many formal presentations throughout the year. In addition to designing solutions to authentic problems, grade six students also build prototypes of their ideas. Some units of study include identity, nutrition, saving and investing money, transportation challenges, and assistive technologies. In addition, students work to enhance the computer technology skills to which they were introduced in grade five.

ENGLISH

Guiding Statement

The purpose of English Language Arts education is to develop the skills that students will need for the diverse literacy demands that they will face throughout their lives. Students need to be capable of critical thinking, listening and reading, and skilled in speaking and writing. Students need to effectively use language for obtaining and communicating information, for comprehending and evaluating texts, for literary response and expression, for learning and reflecting, and for problem solving and application. They need to develop clear, organized, and engaging ideas with respect to audience and purpose. Students need to read for understanding, expanding comprehension by questioning, analyzing, interpreting, and synthesizing sources of information to help them connect to and understand others, the world, and themselves. Through reading a broad range of texts (both literary and informational), writing, listening and speaking, students should build an understanding of their own identities and develop empathy for diverse perspectives in order to gain insight into the human experience.

Essential Questions

How do we convey ourselves clearly, creatively and persuasively to be better understood?

- What processes do writers use?
- How do we use writing to demonstrate what we understand?
- How can we attract and hold an audience's attention?
- How can we develop and express a unique voice?
- How does the order and structure of our ideas impact our ability to communicate effectively?
- How do we adjust our speech and writing to respond to specific audiences, purposes and situations?
- How does the use of evidence help to support our ideas and to make an argument more convincing?

How do we best understand and interpret what others are communicating with us?

- Why is questioning important?
- How can we be effective listeners?
- What strategies can we use to figure out the meaning of a word?
- What strategies can we use to comprehend a text?
- How can we use evidence from a text to support interpretations?
- How can we use the organization of a text to help us understand what we are reading?

How does reading, understanding and responding to literary texts and to one another help us to better understand ourselves and the world we live in?

- How can the analysis of literature help us to make connections, to deepen our own knowledge, and to help us to understand others' viewpoints and perspectives?
- How do authors use different genres to communicate in different contexts, for different purposes and with different audiences?
- How can we use evidence from a text to form and support our opinions?
- How can we gain critical thinking skills through reading?
- How can discussion deepen our own understanding and help us to understand others' perspectives?

How do our language choices impact our own thinking as well as the thinking of others?

- Why do we have rules for language?
- How can grammar and punctuation help us to communicate clearly?
- How do we use a system of shared conventions to communicate with one another?
- How can word choice and word order impact meaning?

Course Descriptions

Grade Five

Readers' and Writers' Workshop is used to introduce students to prewriting strategies and the steps of the writing process. Students practice techniques for narrowing their focus in a piece of writing and learn the value of using precise language when communicating a point. In addition, we regularly review the parts of speech and basic sentence structure. Students explore nonfiction texts, as well as a variety of genres of literature including poetry, folklore, and historical fiction. Texts that have been read include the following: Natalie Babbit's *Tuck Everlasting*, Jerry Spinelli's *Maniac Magee*, Elizabeth George Speare's *The Witch of Blackbird Pond*, Avi's *The Fighting Ground*, Lois Lowry's *Number the Stars*, and Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*.

Grade Six

Readers' and Writers' Workshop is used to target and strengthen specific reading and writing strategies, with an emphasis on expository and paragraph writing. Additionally, word attack strategies and grammar are included in lessons to expand students' vocabulary and sentence development, focusing on a variety of sentence types and structures. Students continue to explore a variety of writing genres, including fiction, non-fiction and poetry. Texts that have been read include the following: Mildred Taylor's *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*; Edgar Allan Poe's "The Raven"; Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*; Edna Barth's biography, *I'm Nobody! Who are you? The Story of Emily Dickinson*; and Laurence Yep's *Dragon's Gate*.

Grade Seven

In this course, students strengthen their skills in paragraph and multi-paragraph writing for persuasive, explanatory and narrative purposes. Vocabulary is developed through studying Latin/Greek roots and affixes, using literary terms, and deciphering context clues. Students study grammar and usage, emphasizing sentence structure and the use of phrases and clauses. Reading comprehension focuses on analyzing elements of fiction and nonfiction and interpreting essential ideas, arguments and perspectives of a text. In addition to a variety of short stories and poems, texts that have been read include the following: Homer's *The Odyssey*, Lois Lowry's *The Giver*, Naomi Shihab Nye's *Habibi*, Edmond Rostand's *Cyrano De Bergerac*.

Grade Eight

Students hone their comprehension and critical thinking skills by reading a variety of fiction, nonfiction and poetry. They practice persuasive speaking and writing techniques, paying particular attention to the value of effectively organizing and supporting their points in assertion-proof and concession-assertion essays. Finally, students expand their knowledge of literary devices, text-based vocabulary, and grammar, particularly clauses. Texts that have been read include the following: Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird*, John Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men*, Lorraine Hansberry's *A Raisin in the Sun*, and William Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

Grade Nine: English I

Students explore the four genres of fiction, poetry, drama, and nonfiction while strengthening specific reading and writing skills, with an emphasis on textual analysis and communicating through different styles of writing. Text-based vocabulary acquisition and a comprehensive review of grammar and usage are included to foster students' continued growth as writers. Texts that have been read include the following: Julia Alvarez's *In the Time of the Butterflies*; Elie Wiesel's memoir, *Night*; John Knowles' *A Separate Peace*; and Tennessee Williams' *The Glass Menagerie*.

Grade Ten: English II

Students explore the four genres of fiction, poetry, drama, and nonfiction with the goal of thoroughly grounding students in more refined understandings of these literary types. Skills emphasized are close reading of the text, critical and informative writing based upon textual details, and clear, precise oral and written communication. Texts that have been read include the following: Nathaniel Hawthorne's

The Scarlet Letter, Jhumpa Lahiri's *Interpreter of Maladies*, Ernest Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises*, and William Shakespeare's *Hamlet*.

Grade Eleven: English III

Students read and analyze fiction, nonfiction, poetry, and dramatic works of major 19th and 20th century American and British writers. Readings reflect a wide variety of style and

perspective; students are encouraged to uncover common themes and historical perspectives. Student writing ranges from literary analysis and criticism to imitations of various writing styles. Students also workshop and write a personal essay connected to the grade eleven Guiding Question, "How can we be mindful of and prepare for the future?" Texts that have been read include F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* and Toni Morrison's *Beloved*. Other authors may include Albee, Beckett, Conrad, Ibsen, Melville, Miller, Thoreau, Twain, Wilde and Woolf.

Grade Twelve: English IV

Students read and analyze fiction, nonfiction, plays, and poetry from around the world that addresses global concerns. Analysis of texts focuses on close reading and finding common threads between authors, styles, regions, and forms of expression. Students respond to course texts through writing, visual references, debates, and presentations. Texts that have been read include Gabriel Garcia Marquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, Marjane Satrapi's *Persepolis*, Ayad Akhtar's *Disgraced*, and a wide assortment of poetry in English and in translation. Other authors may include Camus, Diaz, Dostoevsky, Kundera, and Silko.

MATHEMATICS

Guiding Statement

The purpose of a mathematics education is to enhance students' critical thinking skills. Students will not only solve multi-step equations, but learn to apply the step-by-step processes needed to tackle problems encountered inside or outside of the classroom. Through learning and applying the fundamentals of arithmetic, algebra, geometry and calculus, students will be able to understand and utilize the increasingly specialized skills and concepts necessary for higher level mathematics. They will also develop life skills such as managing personal finances and interpreting common types of graphs. Through a well-rounded mathematical education, students will be able to reason both abstractly and quantitatively and successfully solve problems throughout their lives.

Essential Questions

What is the purpose of having a defined mathematical language?

- How does mathematics describe the real world?
- Why is mathematics called the “Universal Language”?
- How do mathematical symbols provide direction?

What can we learn from studying the relationships between numbers, figures and operations?

- How do parts and wholes relate to one another?
- How can visual representations (number lines, graphs, etc.) help us to use numbers to solve problems?
- What is the role of a variable?

How can we use data to construct reasonable expectations?

- How are data sets gathered?
- How do we use data to predict?
- How can different representations be used to analyze data?

What does it mean to think logically?

- What are the roles of mathematical processes in problem solving?
- How and why are formulas derived?
- How are conceptual ideas practically applied?

What role has mathematics played in the human experience?

- Why were the mathematical concepts that we use first developed?
- Can the same problem solving skills developed in mathematics be used to solve real life problems?
- What is the role of mathematics in the global community?
- How does the concept of geometric figures facilitate our understanding of the world around us?
- How has our understanding of mathematics assisted in the development of technology?

Course Descriptions

Grade Five

Students work to consolidate and apply the knowledge that they previously gained in elementary school. Students spend much of the first half of the year becoming proficient with all operations of whole numbers, fractions, and decimals. They are introduced to algebra and learn the significance of variables. They improve their understanding of geometry and measurement by learning about the properties of polygons, as well as area, perimeter, and volume. Students also study ways to represent and interpret data, including line plots and stem-and-leaf plots, and they learn about measures of central tendency. The primary text for this course is Glencoe/McGraw-Hill's *Math Connects Course One*.

Grade Six

Students work to extend previous understandings of operations with rational numbers. Students learn about rates, and they solve problems by exploring proportional relationships. They further their understanding of algebra and continue to learn how to solve single-variable equations. They improve their understanding of geometry and measurement by learning about the properties of polygons,

as well as area, perimeter, circumference, volume, and surface area. Students also study ways to represent and interpret data, including circle graphs, and they look extensively at simple probability. The primary text for this course is Glencoe/McGraw-Hill's *Math Connects Course 2*, with Pearson's *Connected Mathematics Two: Grade Six* being used as an additional resource.

Grade Seven Mathematics

In this course, students solidify skills related to number sense, including integers, fractions, and rational numbers. Students explore concepts related to percents, ratios, and proportions. They further their investigation of these topics by solving application problems dealing with taxes, discounts, tips, and interest. Students continue to develop their skills in manipulating algebraic expressions and learn to solve multi-step equations and inequalities. In their study of geometry, students identify and describe relationships among figures in two and three dimensions, solve application problems involving measurement, and examine similarity as it relates to figures. Additionally, students learn how to draw inferences about populations based on samples in their study of probability and statistics. The primary text for this course is Larson and Boswell's *Big Ideas Math Grade 7*.

Grade Seven Pre-Algebra

In this course, students explore integers, decimals, fractions, mixed numbers, and rational numbers in greater depth. Equipped with an understanding of rational numbers, students solve application problems using algebraic expressions, equations, and inequalities. In their study of geometry, students construct geometric figures and describe relationships between them. Students determine characteristics of similar and congruent figures, identify and use transformation rules, and apply formulas to geometric figures. A study of probability and statistics includes concepts such as random sampling, drawing inferences, and making predictions. Additionally, students are introduced to the concept of slope and develop an understanding for writing and graphing linear functions. The primary text for this course is Larson and Boswell's *Big Ideas Math Accelerated 7*.

Grade Eight Mathematics

In this course, students work to become proficient with their understanding of real numbers, focusing on approximating and performing operations with irrational numbers. They further their understanding of exponents and begin to apply properties of integer exponents to solve expressions in scientific notation form. They use square and cube roots to represent solutions to equations and then apply these skills to solve problems involving the Pythagorean Theorem. Students continue their study of solving equations and eventually graph and solve linear equations and systems of linear equations, while connecting these to proportional relationships. Students identify, graph, and compare functions, as well as explore geometry concepts. Students distinguish between similarity and congruence, apply volume formulas, perform transformations across a coordinate plane, and make connections between angle sums and triangles. Lastly, students analyze bivariate data through scatter plots and two-way tables. The primary text for this course is Larson and Boswell's *Big Ideas Math Grade 8*.

Grade Eight or Nine: Algebra I

This course includes the study of real numbers, with a greater emphasis on approximating and performing operations with irrational numbers. Students apply the laws of exponents to solve expressions in scientific notation form, as well as use rational exponents to simplify expressions. Students spend an extensive amount of time writing, solving, and graphing linear equations, systems of equations, and linear inequalities. This knowledge of linear equations is then applied to solving, writing, and graphing quadratic equations, with a foundational understanding of polynomials. Students connect their understanding of absolute value equations, inequalities, square root, and exponential equations to graphical representations. Students define, evaluate, and compare functions that model relationships, apply the Pythagorean Theorem, and represent and interpret bivariate data through scatter plots and two-way tables. The primary text for this course is Larson and Boswell's *Big Ideas Math Algebra I*.

Upper School: Geometry

This course focuses on plane Euclidean geometry with an introduction to solid geometry. Emphasis is placed on improving students' deductive reasoning skills through writing mathematical proofs and problem solving. Topics include geometric constructions, writing proofs, properties of triangles and polygons, congruence, similarity, circles, coordinate geometry, triangle trigonometry, transformations, and geometric probability. Texts used for this course include Pearson's *CME Project: Geometry* and Pearson's *Geometry: Common Core*.

Upper School: Algebra II

This course solidifies and builds upon the skills acquired in Algebra I and Geometry with continued emphasis on problem solving. Students apply their knowledge of linear and quadratic functions to work with a variety of new functions, including polynomial, exponential, logarithmic, and trigonometric functions. Other topics explored include systems of equations, matrices, complex numbers, advanced factoring, polynomial division, fractional exponents, exponential and logarithmic equations, trigonometric identities and equations, and probability. The primary text for this course is Pearson's *Algebra II: Common Core*.

Upper School: Algebraic Functions & Trigonometry

This course begins by weaving together previous studies of functions including linear, quadratic, exponential, logarithmic, radical, polynomial, and rational functions. Students explore these topics through applications in data analysis using systems of equations and matrices. In the second semester, students analyze trigonometric ratios and functions, inverse trigonometric functions, and applications of trigonometry in physics and navigation using vectors, the laws of cosine and sine, and representations of complex numbers in trigonometric form. *Prerequisite: Algebra II*

Upper School: Applications of Probability & Statistics

In this course, students explore the use of probability and statistics in the analysis of data and its use in decision making. The first half of the course focuses on how to properly collect and present data, working on the skills of finding the mean, median, and mode, and creating histograms and scatterplots. Students work to understand the concepts of causation, correlation, and bias, while analyzing different data sets. In the second half of the course, students learn the fundamentals of statistical inference and probabilistic methods for decision making. Some projects include an economic analysis of baseball and a small business price-setting simulation. Throughout the course, students use computer software to present and analyze data. *Prerequisite: Algebra II*

Upper School: Advanced Statistics with Programming

Students begin this course by exploring probability and basic counting principles such as independent vs. dependent events and the choose function. They then focus on sampling and exploratory data analysis, including regression, contingency tables, and probability distributions. Students practice the skills of using simulations and making statistical inferences by predicting and creating models. Computer programming labs are used during the course to provide students with a powerful tool to explore and analyze data, culminating with the creation of experimental models. By the end of the year, students are expected to design and implement statistical surveys and experiments, gather and analyze data, and formally present results. *Prerequisite: Algebra II*

Upper School: Pre-Calculus

In this course, students continue to build upon their knowledge of functions, exploring them from a more abstract perspective. Students progress with their in-depth study of trigonometry and are introduced to polar and parametric equations, trigonometry with complex numbers, and vectors. Other topics explored include nonlinear inequalities, rational functions, conic sections, and sequences and series. This course concludes with an introduction to limits in preparation for Calculus. The primary text for this course is *Pre-Calculus with Limits* by Ron Larson. *Prerequisite: Algebra II*

Upper School: Calculus

In this course, students continue their exploration of limits and continuity. They study derivatives, second derivatives, and their applications. Students then focus on antiderivatives and their applications. Through their explorations, students come to understand the Fundamental Theorem of Calculus, as well as integrals and infinite series. Computer programming labs and mathematical software are used throughout the course to model and solve problems. The primary text for this course is *Calculus* by James Stewart. *Prerequisite: Pre-Calculus*

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Guiding Statement

The purpose of Physical Education is to increase the physical capability, fitness level, self-responsibility and enjoyment of physical activity for all students so that they choose to be physically active for life. Students should understand how being physically active can help them live a healthier life and improve their self-confidence and self-esteem. Students will be given the opportunity to participate in a wide range of developmentally appropriate activities that will give students the chance to be leaders, reduce stress, cooperate with others and accept responsibility for their own behavior. Physical Education will also provide students the opportunity to increase their motor skill development, muscular strength, flexibility, muscular endurance, and cardiovascular endurance to give students the confidence to participate in all activities safely. With the knowledge and skills gained in Physical Education class, students will have the confidence to participate in sports and other physical activities outside the school environment.

Essential Questions

Sports & Fitness

- Why are sports important?
- Why do we have rules?
- What strategies do the top performers and teams use?
- How can we achieve greater power and more consistent skills?
- How can improved fitness levels improve our skills and game?
- How can we hit with greatest power without losing control?
- How important is follow-through for distance and speed?
- What feedback will enhance or improve performance most?
- What does it mean to be fit?

Teamwork

- Why can a team with great skills not be successful?
- Who is a “winner” in athletics?
- How can communication improve teamwork?
- How can failure lead to success?
- What makes a good team player or partner?
- What makes a good leader?

Self-Reflection

- How can pushing myself to work hard improve my confidence?
- Does practice always make me better?
- What are the best ways for me to live a healthy life?
- How can I be the best team member I can be?

Course Descriptions

Grade Five

Students work on improving their endurance by doing timed runs or jumping activities and improving their muscular strength by completing push-ups and sit-ups. Qualities of a good teammate and leader are discussed throughout the year and emphasized in competitive and noncompetitive play. Some of the topics explored have included flag football, softball, basketball, volleyball, badminton, floor hockey, fitness, team handball, and lacrosse.

Grade Seven

Students continue to work on increasing their fitness levels from previous years. They are introduced to a variety of abdominal exercises and unique upper body exercises to increase muscular strength. Students are expected to demonstrate an understanding of game rules, begin to use more advanced strategies during games and activities, and demonstrate sport-related skill techniques with greater precision. Some of the topics explored have included flag football, softball, basketball, fitness, badminton, volleyball, team handball, floor hockey, soccer, and lacrosse.

Upper School

Students in the Upper School participate in physical fitness activities offered at Plymouth Fitness for one semester each year. Classes have included Cardio Sport, Weight Training, Spinning, and Pilates. Students rotate through a number of training activities, with a focus on setting and achieving individual fitness goals.

SCIENCE

Guiding Statement

The purpose of a Science education is to help students develop the skills and conceptual foundation necessary to effectively use the methods of scientific inquiry and engineering design to answer questions and solve problems in the world around us. Students will learn to make objective observations, ask relevant questions, analyze problems, come up with creative solutions, support their conclusions with evidence, and communicate their ideas clearly. Learning to think like scientists and engineers will enable students to approach new questions and problems independently, and they will be more adept at making connections and assimilating new information into the framework of their existing understanding. They will become critical thinkers who are better able to judge the complexity of issues such as those presented in technology, medicine, and the environment. By modeling inquiry and design in our classrooms, we hope to foster a life-long curiosity that will inspire students to ask questions, investigate how things work, and look for new and creative ways to solve challenges in everyday life. The goals that we have set for our students will be achieved through the collective study of earth and space science, life science, the physical sciences, and technology/engineering.

Essential Questions

How do we use science to answer questions and explain the world around us?

Process Questions

- What kinds of questions can science answer?
- What are the methods of scientific inquiry?
- How are scientific theories and laws developed?
- What makes an effective observer?
- What kinds of evidence are useful in science?
- How do we recognize patterns?
- How do we classify the world around us?
- How can we use technology to extend our ability to make observations and collect evidence?
- How can we effectively communicate our ideas about how the world works?
- How do models help us represent and develop abstract ideas?
- How are mathematical equations useful in science?
- How do we express scientific understanding through writing?

Content Questions

- What is a system and how do systems interact?
- What does it mean to be alive?
- How are matter and energy related?
- How do forces affect the natural world?
- How do we appropriately use technology to address global challenges?

Course Descriptions

Grade Five

Students explore a range of topics within the life, physical, and earth and space sciences. Some units include: Plant Structures and Functions; Rocks and Minerals; and Force, Motion, and Machines. Students are introduced to the scientific inquiry method, discovering how to think like scientists. Some specific investigations include germinating and planting seeds to explore plant structures, collecting and evaluating local soil samples, and designing compound machines. A variety of text and web-based resources are used in this course, including MacMillan/McGraw-Hill's *Science*.

Grade Six

Students explore topics within the physical sciences and earth and space science. Students deepen their understanding of the interacting nature of the Earth's four major systems: the geosphere, hydrosphere, atmosphere, and biosphere. They work towards an understanding of the place of the

Earth in the solar system and changes in the Earth's composition and topography over time. Students continue to practice the scientific inquiry method, with investigations becoming more quantitative, as mathematics, data tables, graphs, and models are regularly used. Experiments and labs include, but are not limited to: Density of Fluids; Earth's Interior; and Earthquakes and Volcanoes. A variety of text and web-based resources are used in this course, including Prentice Hall's *Science Explorer* series.

Grade Seven

Students explore systems and cycles while continuing to develop scientific inquiry skills to help answer scientific questions. Through an integrated science approach, students explore Earth's systems and processes as well as the human impact on our planet. Students investigate the structure and processes of organisms and ecosystems, electricity and magnetism, energy, and technology/engineering. Students participate in a design challenge to build working solar cars using the technology design process. A variety of text and web-based resources are used in this course, including Prentice Hall's *Science Explorer* series.

Grade Eight

Students explore topics within space science, including technology and the space program, and the life sciences, including environmental science, cells and heredity, and human biology. Students continue to develop scientific inquiry skills, making connections between science and their daily lives through research projects and investigations. Examples of investigations include preparing apples for space travel and researching genetic diseases. A variety of text and web-based resources are used in this course, including Prentice Hall's *Science Explorer* series.

Grade Nine: Introductory Physics

Students explore the physical world around them, from the local community to places as distant as the stars. Students apply mathematical skills and formulas to calculate and understand concepts such as motion, forces, velocity, work, acceleration, and potential and kinetic energy. Topics of study include conservation of energy and momentum, heat and heat transfer, waves, electromagnetism, and electromagnetic radiation. Content is built around hands-on laboratories such as measuring the motion of a projectile in horizontal and vertical planes, investigating collisions of carts, and exploring the properties of light. Students examine many of their own questions and discover ways to collect data to support or refute hypotheses. Students learn the difference between scalar and vector quantities, improve graphing skills, and gain practice designing experiments. A variety of text and web-based resources are used in this course, including *Conceptual Physics* by Hewitt.

Grade Ten: Chemistry

Students investigate the composition, properties, and structure of substances. Topics of study include physical behavior of matter, atomic concepts, the periodic table, chemical bonding, moles and stoichiometry, solutions, kinetics and equilibrium, acid-base chemistry, oxidation-reduction reactions, and organic chemistry. Through laboratory investigations, students gain practice in making observations of chemical reactions and substances, calculating and interpreting results from experiments, maintaining laboratory journals, and communicating their work. Labs include modeling isotopes, separating a mixture, studying the shapes and polarities of various molecules, investigating different types of reactions, examining how the colligative properties of a salt water solution can be used to make ice cream, and using acid-base chemistry to tie-dye t-shirts. The primary text for this course is *Chemistry: Matter and Change* by McGraw-Hill Education.

Grade Eleven: Biology

Students in this course develop an understanding of the diversity of life and interactions of organisms with each other and the environment, improve scientific literacy skills, and gain an appreciation for the natural world and local biological communities. This course includes regular laboratory investigations that help students to understand the central concepts and fundamental principles of the living environment. Students explore topics in biochemistry and cell biology, genetics, evolution, basic anatomy and physiology, and ecology. Emphasis is on learning science by doing science and on

understanding biological interactions within a system. Students can expect to complete a wide range of independent and cooperative learning activities to develop experimental design, data analysis, communication, and laboratory skills.

Upper School: Advanced Biology

Students in this course build upon their prior knowledge of biology while developing more advanced skills such as interpretation and critique of data, scientific writing, and statistical analysis. These skills are emphasized by reading and analyzing scientific publications and discussing current events in biological science. The course includes topics on evolution and biodiversity, advanced genetics, the flow of energy through biological systems, and the interactions between living things. Laboratory investigations include: an in-depth dissection of a fetal pig in order to investigate the comparative anatomy of mammals; agarose gel electrophoresis as a fundamental skill for biotechnology; and several experiments involving microscopy. The primary text is the tenth edition of *Campbell Biology* by Reece et al. Students in this advanced course should anticipate a rigorous schedule and are expected to be self-directed, motivated, and able to work independently.

Upper School: Advanced Physics

In this course, students build upon their prior knowledge of physics in order to discover how the mathematical disciplines of Algebra and Calculus are applied to explain natural phenomena. Students continue to explore the role of physics on Earth and throughout the universe. Additionally, students practice and develop the skills of problem solving, experimental design, and scientific reasoning, ultimately gaining a better understanding of connections between physics and society. The primary text for this course is *Physics for Scientists and Engineers* by Knight. Students in this advanced course are expected to be self-directed, motivated, and able to work independently. *Corequisite: Calculus*

Upper School: Earth & the Environment

This course combines an introduction to the science of Earth's systems and a study of human impact on the environment. Earth science concepts may include global climate patterns, plate tectonics and mineral formation, properties of ecosystems, and the role of water on Earth. The study of these concepts is linked to analysis of issues facing the local region, through case studies on topics such as climate change, electricity generation, fisheries management, and reliance upon a sole source aquifer. The aim of each case study is to prepare students to participate in current debates that arise from these regional issues and to evaluate what should be done. Students learn to formulate arguments that compare the relative importance of economic, environmental, and social factors. During the final term, students choose their own environmental issue to explore, honing research and presentation skills as they delve into these challenges and discuss practical solutions.

SOCIAL STUDIES

Guiding Statement

The purpose of a Social Studies education is to help students become actively engaged and aware citizens. Students will view multiple perspectives from throughout history and up to the present-day, considering the efforts of those who have fought for democratic ideas and values. They will understand the role that each citizen plays in contributing to society, living and working as responsible members of a larger community. Students will gain critical thinking skills by investigating a variety of historically significant events and texts. Students will interpret and analyze primary sources from the past and present, learning to identify factual evidence and notice bias. They will be able to effectively communicate their ideas, through writing and speaking, asking relevant questions and making direct connections to issues of the present-day. The goals that we have set for our students will be achieved through the collective study of culture, history, geography, civics, and economics.

Essential Questions

How do we define and understand cultural identity?

- How do separate cultures around the world influence each other?
- How does culture shape both society and the individual?
- How can cultural diversity create conflict or debate?
- How are traditions from native cultures preserved through the generations?
- How do events occurring around the world connect/relate to each other?

How do we understand the past?

- How is history recorded?
- How do events of the past connect to the present and the future?
- How can we use artifacts to better understand the past?
- How does cultural perspective shape understanding of the past?
- How do we identify credible resources?
- What process steps are involved with independent research?
- How can a timeline help us understand historical context?

How do geographical factors shape the history and the people living in a region?

- How do we use maps and geographic tools to understand a place?
- Why do people migrate or travel to new places?
- How does human behavior impact the physical environment?
- How can changes in climate, natural resources, and landscape impact a region?
- How are the borders/boundaries on maps created?

How are decisions made for the public good?

- What are the roles and responsibilities of free citizens?
- How are social or political conflicts resolved by groups?
- How could people respond to a situation where equality has been denied?
- How should established institutions best exercise their authority in society?
- What characteristics make a good or effective leader?

How do people get the goods and services they need?

- What are the effects or consequences of commerce and trade?
- Which key factors help to regulate and sustain an economy?
- How does having a strong economy impact people in a society?
- What factors contribute to the allocation of goods and services?

Course Descriptions

Grade Five

Students explore the early civilizations and tribes in the Americas, European colonization, and the United States' independence and westward expansion. Interspersed is discussion of current events that is better understood through the students' developing historical knowledge. Students examine primary sources, such as newspaper excerpts, letters, and journals, in order to compare and contrast and make personal connections to history. They regularly practice map-reading skills and are introduced to the research process, working together to develop and explore questions related to pertinent research topics. Texts that have been read include the following: Joy Hakim's *Making Thirteen Colonies* and *The First Americans*, *Junior Scholastic*, and *Colonial America Primary Sources*.

Grade Six

In this course, students examine Africa, India and China, exploring the history, geography, and current events of each region. In addition to building map-reading and researching skills, an emphasis is placed on analyzing primary documents and developing critical thinking skills. Texts that have been read include the following: the autobiography, *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Oloudah Equiano*; George Washington Williams' "Letter to King Leopold on the Congo, 1890"; Ancient Chinese oracle bone inscriptions from the Shang Dynasty; and the edicts of King Ashoka.

Grade Seven

In this course, students explore the development of early human life on earth, the characteristics of civilized, agrarian societies in the Fertile Crescent, and the emergence, success and the collapse of the ancient Mediterranean empires. Students examine the ongoing conflicts in the modern-day Middle East and Central Asia, while also confronting the complex concept of globalization. Students continue to develop their researching skills by locating a variety of credible resources and using factual evidence to support their assertions. Students analyze numerous primary sources, examining the universal themes of history, as expressed by both ancient and modern cultures. Primary sources that have been read include the following: *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, *Hammurabi's Codex*, *The Funeral Oration of Pericles*, and President Truman's 1948 telegram to Israel.

Grade Eight

This course emphasizes civic responsibility, with students exploring topics ranging from the founding of the United States and the structure of its government to the Civil War and Civil Rights Movement. Students are challenged to break down complex primary sources and to question and analyze the language and meaning of the documents, including the *Declaration of Independence*, the *U.S. Constitution*, and the *Bill of Rights*. Students work to hone their researching skills by conducting a long-term, in-depth research project connected to a theme in history.

Grade Nine: U.S. History II in the World

In this U.S. and world history course, students explore the following topics: labor movements in the United States; the World Wars; genocide; post-war culture in the United States; life under the Iron Curtain; the Cold War; and the Vietnam War. Students work towards a mastery of questioning and analysis skills for a variety of sources. They regularly conduct independent research, culminating in presentations and a formal research paper. Texts that have been read include the following: Howard Zinn's "The Colorado Coal Strike"; the *Treaty of Versailles*; President Wilson's *Fourteen Points*; Hitler's *Mein Kampf*; Marx's *The Communist Manifesto*; and President Reagan's speech, *Evil Empire*.

Grade Ten: Global History I

In this course, students explore topics ranging from the history of world religions to the rise of empires and the consequences of a global society. While the focus of the course dates from 400-1800, students analyze history through a thematic and case study approach. As a result, students look to understand big ideas that cross time and place while also understanding specific details of certain events. For example, students uncover common traits of the collapse of an empire and then apply

those characteristics to evaluate why the Ottoman Empire, Umayyad Caliphate, the Han Dynasty, or the Kingdom of Ghana collapsed. In addition, students explore the concept of revolutions, looking closely at the French and Haitian Revolutions, as well as the Spanish American Wars of Independence. Students are expected to conduct increasingly complex research, synthesizing information from a number of primary and secondary sources and regularly presenting their findings through exhibits, presentations, and papers. By the end of the course, students have a better understanding of how separate cultures have influenced each other and the complexities of our international community.

Grade Eleven: Civics & Economics

This course asks students to consider their roles as global citizens and consumers with responsibilities to their counterparts at the local, national, and international levels. Students learn about their rights and responsibilities in our state and federal governmental systems and about the fundamentals of our rapidly changing global economy. During this course, students choose a local problem, conduct field research, collect and analyze data, and work together to design a polished presentation of their findings and proposed solutions to invited guests and members of the public. The course also builds from the financial literacy units students explored in middle school, reviewing microeconomics and personal finance. Students then explore macroeconomics, including topics such as market structures and international trade. A culminating individual research paper requires students to incorporate lessons and themes from throughout the year, while also demonstrating their research, academic writing, and presentation skills.

Upper School: Anthropology

This course introduces students to the discipline of anthropology, specifically cultural anthropology, through reading and analyzing ethnographies, conducting small projects to practice anthropological skills, and exploring eleven anthropological questions that help guide and define the field of cultural anthropology. Some of the questions include “How do I learn about culture?” “What is my perspective?” and “Am I judging this?” Through investigating these questions, students develop a coherent sense of how anthropologists can logistically, ethically, and meaningfully conduct research. Students investigate their own culture through small projects in order to better grasp the importance of each anthropological question. These projects may include observing an unfamiliar event and interviewing a participant, analyzing jokes and their context from different cultures, or observing and analyzing door opening behavior in a public space. For the culminating assignment, students choose an ethnography and independently analyze it.

Upper School: International Relations

This course introduces students to the field of international relations, focusing on how nations cooperate, compromise, and manage conflict. Students explore the different theoretical approaches of international relations and use these approaches to analyze issues such as international trade, peacekeeping, war, and global environmental concerns. Students investigate historical and present-day case studies to better understand the roles and responsibilities of individual nations and international organizations in a global society. Case studies may involve nuclear proliferation, global terrorism, economic sanctions, and environmental treaties. To conclude the course, students conduct an original case study of an area, issue, or conflict. They research the historical, social, and economic context, apply different theoretical approaches, and make foreign policy recommendations based on evidence.

Upper School: Local History

Using the rich historical resources of the region, students in this course explore local history beyond the familiar story of Plimoth Plantation. In the process, they hone historical research skills, analyzing primary sources and archives to more fully understand the past and its people. Topics in early history may include the experiences of Wampanoag men attending Harvard in the 1660's and the causes and consequences of King Philip's War (1675-76), a devastating conflict that ended the relative peace between the native population and English settlers. The course may include the following topics of study: patterns of immigration to the region; local economic history and the role of the waterfront over time; the 1920's trial of anarchist Italian immigrants, Sacco and Vanzetti, one of whom worked at

the Plymouth Cordage Company; and the 1970 Native American protest of the Plymouth Thanksgiving celebration. Through investigating the history of different groups of people over different time periods, students gain an appreciation of the diversity of experiences within the local region. By conducting authentic research and regularly practicing historical thinking and writing, students do the work of a historian and leave the course ready to analyze other time periods and places beyond our harbor.

Upper School: Philosophy

Philosophy translates to “love of wisdom.” In this class, students examine a variety of viewpoints in order to begin to answer fundamental philosophical questions. After developing a good understanding of what philosophy is--its subfields, its process, and its history-- students explore fundamental questions through reading, analyzing, and critiquing arguments from influential philosophers including Plato, Descartes, Locke, Aquinas, and Ryle, among others. Essential questions explored in this course include “Is knowledge possible?” “What have philosophers said about the existence of God?” “What makes you you and me me?” and “How should we tell right from wrong?” Students consistently apply their understandings of readings and assess the cogency of philosophers’ arguments through frequent analytical essays.

WORLD LANGUAGES

CLASSICS

Guiding Statement

The purpose of a Classics education is to help students communicate more effectively and understand cultural perspective. Through translating Classical languages, students will better understand how to interpret the syntax of other languages, including English, and they will gain skills that will enable them to determine the meanings of unfamiliar English vocabulary. Students should be able to recognize how societies and languages evolve, how they are influenced and influence others, and how to take perspective. With the benefit of a Classics education, both linguistic and cultural, students will be able to make connections to other disciplines and comparisons to their own language and culture. In this way, the study of Classics enables students to participate in their own communities in a more informed way and be more aware as global citizens.

Essential Questions

What is the purpose of language?

- How do we communicate?
- How do we identify the strengths and weaknesses/limits of a language?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of the Latin language? English language?
- How do languages evolve?

How do we comprehend a classical language?

- What makes a translation correct?
- Do words have an exact meaning?
- Is punctuation necessary?
- Is word order necessary?
- Should translators value exact meaning or style more?
- Should a translator take into account the cultural perspective of the original author?

What makes a culture successful?

- Does a dominant society have responsibilities?
- Why was Ancient Rome so powerful?
- What are the most important qualities for a culture to have in order to be successful?
- What caused the downfall of Ancient Rome?
- How are individuals' identities connected to their culture?

Why does studying a classical language and culture connect to our lives?

- Why does English contain so much Latin?
- How is our community affected by classical language and culture?
- What lessons can we learn from studying a classical language and culture?
- How is the study of a language and culture useful?
- How does our culture affect our use of language?

Course Descriptions

Grade Seven: Latin 1A

Students are introduced to the basic skills needed to learn a foreign language, including study techniques for learning vocabulary and recognizing parts of speech. The students also learn aspects of language that are more particular to Latin, such as inflection and the function of the nominative, accusative and dative cases. Students learn to recognize and form indicative active verbs in the present, imperfect and perfect tenses, while also building up a large base of vocabulary. The culture explored in Latin 1A includes more in-depth information about Roman leisure activities, customs and Classical mythology, as well as an introduction to the remains of ancient sites.

Grade Eight: Latin 1B

By the end of this course, students have learned all five major noun cases, plus the vocative case. They can conjugate active and passive indicative verbs in all six tenses as well as form the present active participle. Students can manipulate adjectives in any declension, change their degree, and convert them into adverbs. They regularly work with pronouns, including demonstrative pronouns. Students translate by separating sentences into clauses, including relative clauses, and phrases and examining the endings and functions of words. They acquire many new vocabulary words and continually identify derivatives in the English language. Culturally, the students explore the history of Rome from its founding by Romulus through the end of the Roman Republic, as well as the geography of the Roman Empire. They also continue to learn about the Roman religion, including myths, and customs. The primary textbook for this course is *Latin for Americans*.

Upper School: Latin I

This class combines all of the grammar from Latin 1A and 1B. Cultural topics explored include an overview of Classical mythology, Roman history during the Monarchy and Republic, Roman government, and Roman daily life. This course uses the *Latin for Americans* textbook, and students will read excerpts, in translation, from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, Livy's *Ab Urbe Condita*, and Virgil's *Aeneid*.

Upper School: Latin II

Through learning the ablative absolutes, all tenses of participles and infinitives, the subjunctive mood, and more vocabulary, students explore new clauses and grammatical constructions in Latin, which do not always have direct English equivalents. Students use new grammar such as purpose clauses and demonstratives to discover more of the nuances of the Latin language. By the end of the year, students have had exposure to most of the basics of Latin grammar and are prepared to take on the task of reading adapted texts from authentic Latin authors in Latin III. Latin II students continue their investigation of Ancient Rome by focusing on the history of the Roman Republic as well as exploring the narratives of Greek and Roman mythological heroes.

Upper School: Latin III

In this course, students strengthen their skills in translating and learn some of the trickier Latin grammar, such as new subjunctive clauses, uses of both the gerund and gerundive, and numerous new usages of noun cases. Once they have learned these, they delve into authentic Latin by reading the letters of Pliny the Younger, starting with his first hand account of the eruption of Mt. Vesuvius. In addition, students explore the early days of the empire in cultural lessons themed around analysis of the question, "What makes a good Emperor?" In addition, students explore cultural topics related to the Latin stories that they read and translate. Texts include *Latin for Americans*, Pliny's *Epistulae*, and Livy's *Ab Urbe Condita* (Adapted).

Upper School: Latin Authors, Cicero & Sallust

This course focuses on guiding students through unadapted Latin prose and improving their reading skills. Students engage with two main prose texts: Cicero's *In Catilinam* and Sallust's *Bellum Catilinae*. The connecting theme of these texts is the unrest of the first century BCE when Catiline, a Roman patrician, led a conspiracy against the government. Cicero, one of the world's most famous orators, must use his political acumen and strong oratory skills to avoid civil war. Through analyzing these texts, students explore concepts such as rhetorical style and bias, both within persuasive arguments and historical writings which are thought to be objective. In addition to the study of literature, this course helps to deepen understanding of important grammatical forms and constructions as seen in the readings. It also gives students strategies of the best ways to approach authentic Latin literature.
Prerequisite: Latin III

Upper School: Latin Authors, Caesar and Vergil

In this course, students refine the skills that they have developed in their previous Latin courses to read authentic prose and poetry. Specifically, students focus on the historical accounts of Caesar's *Comentarii de Bello Gallico* and Vergil's *Aeneid*. Caesar's commentaries build upon students' prior knowledge of the time period and allow them to read a primary source discussing war strategies, conquest, and cultural encounters. In reading Vergil's *Aeneid*, students explore the intricacies of Roman poetry, as well as the political and historical significance of Vergil's work. Beyond simply translating, emphasis is placed on scanning the meter in Latin poetry, learning different rhetorical and poetic devices employed by Caesar and Vergil, analyzing the characteristics of each genre, investigating the connections between the two works, and exploring the biases and propaganda of the tumultuous times in which they were written. *Prerequisite: Latin III*

Upper School: Latin Authors, Catullus & Ovid

In this course, students refine the skills that they have developed in previous Latin courses by reading the poetry of Catullus and Ovid. While reading Catullus, students focus on the wide-ranging themes of the *libellus* and the unique stylistic features of neoteric poetry. Students have the opportunity to see Catullus' influence on later poets as they read selections from Ovid's *Amores* and *Metamorphoses*. As they read Ovid, students focus on both the stylistic features of his poetry and Ovid's engagement with contemporary events. Throughout the course, students pay special attention to the development of each author's poetic persona. In addition to translating, students practice scanning dactylic hexameter, hendecasyllabic, and elegiac couplets. Students read not only for grammar, but also for analysis and overall meaning of the poetry. *Prerequisite: Latin III*

MODERN WORLD LANGUAGES

Guiding Statement

Studying a modern world language helps students communicate more effectively and understand cultural perspective. Through learning to communicate in a modern world language, students gain skills that help them to better understand the grammar and syntax of English, as well as other languages. Through the understanding of a modern world culture, they gain an appreciation of diverse cultures. They also gain a better understanding of how their own culture develops, changes, and connects to other cultures. The study of a modern world language helps students become more accepting of citizens from other cultures and helps to make the students themselves more aware as global citizens.

Essential Questions

What is the purpose of language?

- How do we communicate in this era of globalization?
- How does written language differ from spoken language?
- How do we identify the strengths and weaknesses/limits of a language?

How do we comprehend a modern world language?

- How do we trace the origins of a language?
- What makes for successful communication in a modern world language?
- How does pronunciation affect the understanding of a modern world language?
- Is punctuation necessary?
- Is word order necessary?

How are culture and language connected?

- How does culture affect the development of a language?
- How can we understand a culture through studying its literature and customs?
- How do changes in a culture affect a language?
- Why do dialects develop?

How does studying a modern world language and culture connect to our lives?

- What is the value of learning a modern world language?
- How does globalization affect us?
- How does our knowledge of other cultures affect our own lives?
- What are the connections between our culture and other cultures around the world?

Course Descriptions

Upper School: Spanish I

Students explore basic Spanish vocabulary and grammar used in everyday situations. Students learn two tenses: present and preterit. Simple authentic texts, such as advertisements, menus, maps, and poems, are used to develop and reinforce the four language skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Students are encouraged to speak in Spanish as often as possible to progressively end the first year communicating completely in Spanish. Students learn about the culture of Spanish-speaking countries and the connections between the culture and language. *Avancemos* is the primary resource for the course, which provides a wide variety of materials for students to reinforce and expand upon what they learn in class.

Upper School: Spanish II

Students expand upon the grammatical foundation as well as the vocabulary acquired in the first year, placing a greater emphasis on meaning and communication. After a quick review of material from Spanish I, the class moves to being spoken 90% in Spanish. Students work on more intricate grammar and sentence structures. In addition, the subjunctive mood and commands are presented, and vocabulary expansion is a priority. Students regularly work on oral presentations, skits, songs, and dialogues. There is also an increase in the use of authentic texts and media programs in Spanish.

Spanish and Latin American culture continue to be interwoven into activities and assignments. *Avancemos*, level two, is the primary resource for this course.

Upper School: Spanish III

Students explore a variety of tenses, and the subjunctive mood is studied in great depth, including the imperfect subjunctive. There is a concentrated review and amplification of grammar, vocabulary, and sentence structure, with this being the final year of intensive grammatical study. Instruction and classroom time are mostly in Spanish; supplementary materials include authentic sources, such as films, news programs, videos, magazines, short stories and articles by native writers. Spanish and Latin American culture are studied in more depth through the different supplementary materials used in class. Students keep a journal throughout the year about their thoughts and reactions to the culture and language, as well as any related information they get outside of class. *Avancemos*, level three, is the primary resource for this course.

Upper School: Spanish IV

This course focuses on improving language skills. Students do periodic reviews of important grammar and make frequent presentations in class. Speaking and listening skills are especially emphasized with the goal of achieving more precise communication. Films and documentaries are viewed periodically. Students continue to keep a journal about their thoughts and reactions to cultural issues and selections from class, as well as any information outside of class related to Spanish language and Spanish-speaking countries.

Upper School: Spanish V

This course continues to focus in depth on the acquisition of the Spanish language, exploring a variety of genres from classic literature to modern cinema. This course is designed to meet the specific needs of the students in the class, providing opportunities for each individual to perfect his or her language skills.

ADVISORY

Throughout the year, grade-level Advisory Teams work together to support the personal and academic growth of students. Teams collaboratively develop and implement an Advisory curriculum connected to the grade-level guiding question that addresses orientation to the school, student skills, community building, wellness, and service learning. Exploring these topics contributes to students' academic success, sense of community membership, and overall social and emotional health.

Grade Five

During their first year at Rising Tide, students are oriented to the school and explore what it means to be a member of a community, focusing on maintaining healthy family relationships and friendships. Furthermore, to prepare for their responsibilities as members of a school community, Advisory groups work on developing skills such as organization, active studying, and time management. Students also are oriented to the technology that they are expected to use at school, while beginning to discuss internet safety and appropriate online communication. In Communications & Investigations class in the spring, grade five students participate in a unit on healthy lifestyles, a topic that is central to all levels of the Advisory curriculum. Groups discuss puberty and adolescent development, and Advisors then conduct question-and-answer sessions with students about these important topics. Finally, students work with the school nurse practitioner to learn the basics of first aid and personal safety.

Grade Six

In grade six, students explore their connections with one another, focusing on healthy friendships and respect for others. As part of this exploration, students discuss digital citizenship and the importance of safe and respectful online communication. Additionally, Advisory groups build on the previous year's attention to healthy lifestyles. They participate in a unit on substance abuse, with a focus on factual information and healthy decision-making, and they explore issues related to body image and self-esteem in conjunction with a Communications & Investigations unit on identity. Students in grade six also have the opportunity to do a service-learning project and to learn basic CPR. Lastly, Advisors continue to work with students on developing skills related to success in school, helping them build effective organizational and study habits.

Grade Seven

Students in grade seven focus on facing and overcoming challenges, beginning the year with a service-learning project connected to community action and citizenship. This focus continues with a unit on mental health, during which students learn factual information about eating disorders and anxiety, while discussing healthy and unhealthy coping strategies and where and how to seek help. Since healthy relationships are a crucial component of mental well-being, Advisories also explore the cycle of friendships, and discuss peer pressure and acceptance of others. In the spring, students review information regarding puberty and human sexuality, and Advisors lead question-and-answer sessions with students related to these important topics. Finally, throughout the year, students work with Advisors to continue to develop skills related to academic success.

Grade Eight

As part of the Advisory program in grade eight, students explore the importance of taking responsibility for themselves and others. Through discussions, Advisors work with students to develop empathy and a more global perspective. Furthermore, grade eight students continue to focus on healthy relationships, discussing different types of relationships in the process. In an effort to foster personal health, students participate in a unit on substance abuse, building from the content that they explored in grade six and discussing practical ways to make healthy decisions. As well, grade eight students work with the school nurse practitioner to review first-aid skills. Students also explore media messages, analyzing advertisements and issues of body image, while discussing online safety and media addiction. Finally, students prepare for their upcoming transition to high school and young adulthood by developing financial literacy through lessons on banking, saving, and budgeting, and by continuing to practice skills related to academic success.

Grade Nine

In grade nine Advisory, students are oriented to the school and spend time investigating the question, “How can we recognize and demonstrate courage?” Additionally, they explore what it means to be physically and mentally healthy, developing skills for confronting challenges including stress and anxiety, eating disorders, depression, and substance abuse. Students also continue to deepen their understanding of healthy relationships. In doing so, they learn about effective interpersonal and online communication, cyberbullying, gender and sexuality, and safe and healthy decision-making around sexual behavior. Finally, grade nine students work in Advisory throughout the year to develop important academic skills, including organization and time management, which are crucial for success in high school.

Grade Ten

Students in grade ten seek to answer the question, “How can we recognize and demonstrate integrity?” Furthermore, they continue to develop their strategies for maintaining a healthy, balanced life. Specifically, Advisory groups practice mindfulness-based stress reduction and other coping strategies, analyze the social and emotional causes and effects of sexual decision-making, and further develop their understanding of depression and substance abuse. Along with continuing to hone important academic skills like time management and self-advocacy, Advisories study various learning styles to help students understand how they learn best. Students also practice skills connected to technology, learning online etiquette, and gaining an understanding of their digital footprints. Additionally, in order to prepare for increasing independence, students seek to gain financial literacy and to understand the legal and safety issues that they will face by becoming licensed drivers. Lastly, students serve their community through projects including food drives, a school recycling program, and a grade-wide initiative to educate others in the Rising Tide community about relevant environmental issues.

Grade Eleven

In grade eleven, students aim to be mindful of and prepare for the future. With this goal in mind, Advisory groups learn about the college-application process and visit a college fair in the spring. They also focus on building resumes and exploring careers using the Massachusetts Career Information System. In order to achieve their short- and long-term goals, students continue to develop skills for academic success, learning about the importance of time management, sleep, exercise, and other healthy habits. Additionally, students explore the health-related and ethical implications of food production, distribution, and consumption. Finally, students collaboratively design a service-learning project centered around their focus on mindfully preparing for the future.

Grade Twelve

During their final year at Rising Tide, students are encouraged to ask, what is my place in the world? In order to investigate this question, they examine issues that are relevant to their school and local community, including depression and substance abuse, and contemplate how they can respond. Students also focus on expanding their place in the world by preparing for college and other future plans. They hone their student skills, deepen their knowledge of the college process, improve their financial literacy, and set goals for maintaining a healthy lifestyle. Furthermore, in order to facilitate the transition out of high school, students continue to work on a central goal of Advisory at all grade levels: recognizing and developing healthy relationships. In particular, students learn conflict resolution, self-defense, and other communication skills to support healthy relationships in their families, amongst their peers, online, and on campus.

SOURCES

State and national curriculum frameworks used for curriculum development:

American Association for the Advancement of Science. *Benchmarks for Science Literacy*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1993.

Gascoyne, Richard C., et al. *Standards for Classical Language Learning*. Oxford, OH: American Classical League, 1997.

Massachusetts Department of Elementary & Secondary Education. *Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks*. Malden, MA: Massachusetts DESE, August 1999-March 2011.

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National Council for the Social Studies. *National Curriculum Standards for Social Studies: A Framework for Teaching, Learning, and Assessment*. Silver Spring, MD: NCSS, 2010.

National Council of Teachers of English. *Standards for the English Language Arts*. Urbana, IL: NCTE, 1996.

National Council of Teachers of Mathematics. *Principles and Standards for School Mathematics*. Reston, VA: NCTM, 2003.

National Research Council. *National Science Education Standards*. Washington, D.C.: The National Academies Press, 1996.

The faculty at Rising Tide regularly reviews educational research for professional development. Below is a sampling of readings that have contributed to our curriculum design and implementation:

Association for Middle Level Education (National Middle School Association). *This We Believe*. Waterville, OH: AMLE, 2010.

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Blythe, Tina, et al. *The Teaching for Understanding Guide*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, Inc., 1998.

Duckworth, Eleanor. *The Having of Wonderful Ideas*. New York, NY: Teachers College, Columbia University, 2006.

Latta, Margaret Macintyre, et al. "Terms of inquiry." *Teachers and Teaching: theory and practice*. Vol. 13, No. 1, February 2007, pp. 21-41.

MacKenzie, Robert J. *Setting Limits in the Classroom*. New York, NY: Three Rivers Press, 2003.

McTighe, Jay and Grant Wiggins. *Understanding by Design*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 2005.

Partnership for 21st Century Skills. "Framework for 21st Century Learning." Washington, D.C.: P21, 2011.

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Sadowski, Michael, Ed. *Adolescents at School*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press, 2003.