

running river school



REAL-LIFE LEARNING • GRADES K THROUGH 8

Middle School Three Year Curriculum

Running River is a school that recognizes learning as natural, that a love of learning is normal, and that real learning is passionate learning. We have a school curriculum that values questions above answers...creativity above fact regurgitation...individuality above conformity, and excellence above standardized performance. (taken from quote by Tom Peters) Our education guides children to know who they are and what they're passionate about; to develop the skills for critical thinking, collaboration, creativity and meeting challenges, so that they manifest their gifts and talents to serve humanity and the planet.

The heart of our curriculum is in our philosophy. The key components of Running River's curriculum are:

- Meaningful, Experiential, Inquiry and Project Based Curriculum
- Integrated Academics
- Real life work presented to authentic audiences
- Mixed Ages/Collaborative AND Individual Learning
- Responsibility/Integrity of engagement & work increasingly coming from the child
- Mastery (quality and excellence of work & skill acquisition)
- In-depth learning from every angle
 - Experimentation
 - Books
 - Internet
 - Experts and community mentors
 - Collaborative Work
 - Questioning
 - Problem solving and original design work
- Learning how to learn and transference across subject areas
- Inner development and outer knowledge go hand in hand...a balanced education cultivates abilities beyond the verbal and conceptual to include matters of heart, character, creativity, self-knowledge, concentration, openness and mental flexibility.
- Communication/Harmonious Living
- Outdoor Education and personal connection to nature
- Life Skills in every area of living
- The Arts ~ Art, Music, Dance, Theater
- Physical Fitness and development of capacities
- Wilderness and city trips

Year One: Growth and Change	Year Two: Shelter and Systems	Year Three: Current Events & Community
<p>Life Skill: Food</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is our relationship to food? • Cooking, planning, shopping, budgeting • Nutrition: What happens in our bodies? • Gardening: Growing & Harvesting 	<p>Life Skill: Building & Fixing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why do we build? • A brief history of architecture • Visiting buildings • Meeting architects • Designing & building project 	<p>Life Skill: Survival Skills for the 21st century</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relating, communicating, expressing • Work Skills • Living skills • Wilderness skills
<p>Chemistry & Life Science</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food chemistry • Evolution • Allopathy vs. Holistic medicine • The body as an integrated system 	<p>Earth Science, Space, Physics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Universe • Our planet • How things work 	<p>Environmental Education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Global Warming • Alternative Energy
<p>History of Change & Growth</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does change effect all aspects of life? • How is our brain changing? (specific study of the adolescent brain) • How do people make change happen? Are we in a period of change now? • Civil War & Industrial Revolution 	<p>History of Government</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the purpose of government? • Major governmental systems in the world and how they evolved • What would utopia look like? • What is war? World Wars I & II • Movements for peace and non-violence: Ghandi, MLK 	<p>A year long study of Current Events:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Different sources of information • A study of advertising, propoganda and media • What is happening around the world and where do we place our attention? • Historical trends: lessons to learn • Service: how can we help?
<p>Collaborative Choice Project</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The class will choose a project related to food to work on for 6 weeks. <p>The project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • has a service element • is trans-disciplinary • culminates in a multi-media and written portfolio of work to present to a panel for critique. • is presented to an authentic audience 	<p>Collaborative Choice Project</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The class will choose a project related to shelter/building/belonging/systems to work on for 6 weeks. <p>The project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • has a service element • is trans-disciplinary • culminates in a multi-media and written portfolio of work to present to a panel for critique. • is presented to an authentic audience 	<p>Individual Passion Project</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8th graders explore a primary passion, 6th-7th graders a project related to community and making a difference. <p>The project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • has a service element • is trans-disciplinary • culminates in a multi-media and written portfolio of work to present to a panel for critique. • is presented to an authentic audience
<p>Math as a separate (and whenever possible integrated) class Language Arts: both separate and integrated</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing: Creative and Expository • Reading: Independent & Classics 	<p>Math as a separate (and whenever possible integrated) class Language Arts: both separate and integrated</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing: Creative and Expository • Reading: Independent & Classics, 	<p>Math as a separate (and whenever possible integrated) class Language Arts: both separate and integrated</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing: Creative and Expository • Reading: Independent & Classics

The Schedule

Middle Schoolers need to be immersed in deep, meaningful, multi-faceted work, contrary to the usual model of fragmented classes that have no connection. We have arranged the year into in-depth modules, as integrated as possible, continuing to insure the development of skill development in every academic area. As written in the three year curriculum map, all modules contain math and language arts, both integrated and separate as necessary.

Fall (Sept-Dec): Class trip, Life Skill and Science modules

Winter (Jan-March): Main theme module

Spring (April-May): Collaborative and Individual Immersion Projects

The Daily Schedule:

8:30-8:40: Contemplative Practice
8:40-9:00: Check-in with work
9-10am: Math Vitamin: <i>The Math Vitamin is a multi-disciplinary approach that allows each student to enter a math task from an area of strength and requires them to work in areas of challenge. Working in one's area of strength as well as in one's areas of challenge is the key to the Math Vitamin process as it builds actual understanding for each math concept that appears in the math curriculum. The Math Vitamin approach begins with students working on a task rather than the teacher delivering a lesson. Students and teachers then debrief their ideas, process and strategize as a class at the close of the math session. This format allows students to do the initial thinking about the steps required for solving the problem and lets the teacher see the entry points each student prefers, follow their thinking, coach each student individually and assess their understanding as they work.</i>
10-11:30: Writing Workshop: <i>warm-up, mini-lesson, work time, sharing. Writing will include all arenas of writing both fiction and non-fiction.</i>
11:30-12pm: Lunch
12-12:30: Open Time: <i>outside time, YMCA, craft club, other activities</i>
12:30-3pm: Project Work Time: <i>language arts, science, research, projects, collaboration</i>
3-3:15: Goal Setting and Sharing

Note: Art lessons will be once a week but art will be included in project work.

Dance and music will be incorporated into the schedule throughout the year.

P.E. instruction will be once a week on a morning as well as regular visits to the YMCA across the street, hiking on a regular basis, and winter snowshoe and cross country skiing.