



MAPLE STREET SCHOOL  
ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE. JOYFUL LEARNING.

## CURRICULUM REPORT

2011-2012



## Maple Street School Faculty 2011-12

**Mary F. Bisselle**, *Head of School*. B.A. Boston College, M.A.L.S. Wesleyan University, E.d.D The University of Vermont. Dr. Bisselle joined Maple Street School in 2007 after completing a four-year doctoral fellowship and teaching graduate and undergraduate students in the Education department at the University of Vermont. Prior to that, she worked for five years at Camp Dudley, YMCA as a consultant and directed an alliance with a girl's camp. She began her career in education at the Taft School in Watertown, Connecticut where she was a dean, teacher, coach and dorm parent for nine years. Most recently, she was awarded a Klingenstein Fellowship for Heads of School from Teachers College of Columbia University.

**Jeffrey Barclay**, *Director of Admissions & Director of Athletics*. B.S. St. Lawrence University, M.S. University of New Hampshire. Mr. Barclay began at Maple Street in 2004 teaching science, math and physical education. He taught physical education for three years at the Ambrit Rome International School in Rome, Italy. Prior to that, Mr. Barclay served as Director of Athletics for the Far Hills Country Day School in Far Hills, New Jersey; he also taught at Pace Academy in Atlanta, and at St. Christopher's School in Richmond, Virginia.

**Whitney Bellingham**, *Second Grade Teacher*. B.S. University of Vermont. Ms. Bellingham received her bachelor degree in Elementary Education from the University of Vermont and has worked and volunteered in primary schools in California and Vermont. She served on the Board of Directors at The Little School in Weston and has spent the last two years working with elderly in their homes. She is a proud graduate of the Teacher Apprentice Program out of Essex Junction, Vermont, earning her certification in middle school English and literacy. She will be teaching 2nd grade this year.

**Laura Brown**, *Kindergarten Teacher*. B.S. Smith, M.F.A. Yale, M.Ed. Pace. Ms. Brown joined the Maple Street School faculty in 2008 after having taught kindergarten and first grade for three years at Brooklyn's P.S. 124. Before she entered education, Ms. Brown worked for many years with various New York stage and film production companies including the City Opera and State Theater, while also teaching Drama, Technical Design and Production as an adjunct professor at Fordham University.

**Maureen Chaffee**, *Third Grade Teacher*. B.S. University of Vermont. Prior to joining Maple Street School in 1999, Ms. Chaffee was a classroom teacher at the Bahrain Bayan School in Isa Town, Bahrain. She has also held elementary teaching positions at the Dothan Brook School in Hartford, Vermont; the Mater Christi School in Burlington, Vermont; Fletcher Elementary School in Fletcher, Vermont; and the St. John Fisher School in Portland, Oregon.

**Geoffrey Chamberlain**, *Sixth Grade Homeroom & Upper School History & Math Teacher*. B.A. Middlebury College, M.A. Castleton State College. Mr. Chamberlain received his bachelor degree from Middlebury College in English with concentrations in US History and Nautical Studies. Recently, he went on to receive his masters of arts degree in teaching from Castleton State. He has worked in many educational settings, both public and independent including Burr and Burton Academy, Manchester Elementary School, and Stratton Mountain School. He also served as an international teacher in the World Teach program in Sakonnakhon, Thailand teaching middle and high school level English classes at the Rajabhat Institute.

**Betsy LaVecchia**, *First Grade Teacher*. B.A. Franklin & Marshall College, M.S. Columbia University. Ms. LaVecchia received her bachelors degree in French, and went on to receive her masters of science degree at Columbia's Teachers College in speech-language pathology, focusing on early childhood education. She worked with children and families at both Albert Einstein College of Medicine as well as Phelps Memorial Hospital. Founder of the Jungle Gym, Ms. LaVecchia has served in local schools both as a speech and language professional and substitute teacher. In addition, she taught internationally at Johns Hopkins University's Center for Talented Youth and, at Lycee Joffre when she lived in Montpellier, France.

**Elizabeth Lindenberg**, *French Teacher*, B.A. Brown University, M.Ed. New York University. Ms. Lindenberg taught French at the Aiken Preparatory School in South Carolina for two years and in New York City schools while at NYU. In addition, Ms. Lindenberg studied French at the Université de Montreal for a year taking non-degree courses in French before coming to Maple Street in 2001.

**Mary Mangiacotti**, *Fifth Grade Homeroom Teacher, Upper School Language Arts*. B.Ed. SUNY Courtland, M.A. Fordham. Mrs. Mangiacotti and her family moved to the area from New Jersey, where she had spent over 20 years teaching and serving as an administrator at schools such as St. Joseph's School, Hoboken Catholic Academy, and St. Saviour Elementary. Mrs. Mangiacotti's specialty is literacy and reading education, and she served as an administrator as well as taught grades four through eight throughout her career.

**Amy Panitz**, *Fourth Grade Teacher*. B.A. Middlebury College, M.S. Ed. from Bank Street College of Education. Prior to coming to Maple Street School in 1999, Ms. Panitz taught at the Park School in Brooklandville, Maryland; at the Georgetown Day School in Washington, D.C.; at the Eagle School in Madison, Wisconsin; and interned at the Bank Street School for Children in New York City.

**Erin Gill Reilly**, *Choral Music Teacher*. St. Mary's College. Mrs. Reilly brings with her a wealth of experience in music. She has been a professional singer and song-writer for 36 years. In her formative years, she performed at Johns Hopkins University's Shriver Hall, and studied music at The Peabody Prep. She attended St. Mary's College of Maryland, and moved to the hub of it all (New York) in the 1980's where she performed all original material, and was accepted into the Songwriter's Hall of Fame master classes.

**Lisa Smith-Edry**, *Seventh Grade Homeroom and Upper School Science Teacher*. B.A. University of Gloucestershire, M.A. University of the West of England. Ms. Edry has taught science at many levels (middle school, high school, and university) in the US and Great Britain. She was a lecturer and tutor at West Oxfordshire College in the UK as well as at Hartpury Agricultural College and Stratton Mountain School. She is a passionate environmentalist, and enjoys yoga and horses.

**Joy Stewart**, *Eighth Grade Homeroom Teacher, Math 5-8*. M.Ed., B.S. University of Vermont. Prior to joining the faculty at Maple Street School in 2002, Ms. Stewart was a kindergarten Teacher at Fisher Elementary School in Arlington, Vermont for four years and the Title I Reading Teacher for four years before that. Ms. Stewart was also the Maple Street School kindergarten teacher for four years.

**Leslie Sullivan**, *Art Teacher*. B.A. in Art Education, University of Vermont. Ms. Sullivan joined the Maple Street School faculty in 2001 with 15 years of experience teaching art to children. She taught at the Berlin-Boylston School System in Boylston, Massachusetts; at the Greenville School in Scarsdale, New York; and at the Convent of the Sacred Heart in Greenwich, Connecticut.

**Erin Villamizar**, *Instrumental Music Teacher, Librarian*. B.A. University of Delaware. Ms. Villamizar hails from Cape Cod and completed her undergraduate work in music education at the University of Delaware with a minor in jazz studies. Ms. Villamizar is a flutist by training, and plays most every band instrument. She has many experiences in K-8 classrooms including teaching composition, instrumental music and music theory. In addition to instrumental music classes, Ms. Villamizar leads the Maple Street School concert band and serves this year as our part-time librarian.

## Maple Street School Mission and Core Values

*“There is always one moment in childhood when the door opens and lets the future in.” Graham Greene*

Maple Street School offers excellence in education through a stimulating curriculum placing value on high academic achievement, meaningful engagement in the visual and performing arts, participation in athletics, and the development of individual and social responsibility. We instill in our students the joy of learning so that they may know the satisfaction of attaining knowledge and understanding.

### Core Values

- Maple Street School seeks students who can benefit from and contribute to an enriched and challenging learning environment, which promotes a full awareness of the world and respect for cultural differences.
- We are committed to excellence in language arts, in mathematics; physical, life and environmental sciences; geography and history; the arts, music, drama, foreign languages, computer literacy, and physical education.
- We are committed to developing environmental awareness and an appreciation of the natural world in order that our students become informed, responsible stewards of the land.
- We believe the visual and performing arts are vital and that creativity in art, music, movement, and drama enhances the child’s capacity to attain and synthesize all knowledge and concepts.
- We believe a solid physical education program promotes skill growth, a sense of teamwork, fair play, and lifelong healthy body awareness.
- We believe that intimate classroom settings encourage effective group interaction, individual focus, and concentration. We are committed to a low student-teacher ratio so that teachers may encourage each individual student to do his or her best, diagnose individual cognitive abilities and learning patterns, skillfully direct effort, and offer the support, which builds confidence and self esteem.
- We ask students to help create a dynamic learning atmosphere by supporting classmates and interact in a thoughtful manner with children of different ages.
- We believe a strong social skills curriculum emphasizes responsibility to the group, respect for others, and cooperation.
- We believe community service through age-appropriate outreach activities is viewed as both a contribution to the school environment and to the broader community.
- We believe that our student body should not be limited to those children whose families can afford a Maple Street education and seek to attract representation from all socioeconomic levels through a substantial need-based scholarship program.

*Maple Street School admits students of any race, color, religion, national or ethnic origin, age, gender, sexual orientation or disability to all the rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. We do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, or national or ethnic origin, age, gender, sexual orientation or disability in the administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, or scholarship programs.*

# Kindergarten

The Maple Street School kindergarten program provides an excellent transition into formal education. Children are given the opportunity to explore and discover at their own pace while being given support and guidance to nurture their own learning styles. As the kindergartners travel through the year they learn to manage their time, make choices, interact responsibly with classmates and schoolmates and begin their journey into independent learning. Throughout their year, kindergartners are provided with ample time to play and explore. Learning through play serves as an important role in the cognitive, creative, language, social and physical development of young children. Through peer interactions, students nourish their individual learning styles, develop a curiosity for new knowledge, and learn ways of problem solving with their peers. Kindergartners at Maple Street School observe and discover life around them while developing a healthy respect for their world, their community, and themselves.

## The Kindergarten Day

The kindergarten meets in the morning each Monday with the whole school community. The All School Meeting is an excellent opportunity for young students to feel that they are a part of the larger student community. They meet with the primary school community once each week to practice speaking and performing in front of an audience, reinforcing connections to the youngest members of the Maple Street School student body. The Primary Meeting allows the kindergarten class to share projects, writing pieces, plays and other creations in a setting that is comfortable and conducive to nurturing their public speaking ventures. Two days throughout the week the kindergarten class meets with other grades. Interactions between older and younger students are inspired by the use of the “buddy system,” pairing up an older student with a younger one for reading and writing. Kindergarten meets with third grade reading buddies and fifth grade scribes once each week.

The kindergarten day begins with a quick independent activity called Morning Papers. These can be activities focused on literacy, math, cutting and pasting, or drawing pieces that are easily finished in a fifteen-minute time block. This is a simple way to engage young minds and separate from parents with a great deal of ease. It sets the stage for an independent and successful day. Kindergarten then joins together in a classroom morning meeting to share information with one another, practice greeting each other, sing songs, read poetry, and review the daily schedule. It serves as the basis for building a strong community. The group discusses plans for the day while also sharing and listening to one another.

Language arts in kindergarten allows for students to join together as a group to participate in poetry reading, interactive writing, phonemic awareness activities, phonics lessons, and reading. Students practice introduced skills in a variety of stations set out throughout the classroom. Students may choose to work alone or in small groups. Students also work individually with the teacher on a daily basis allowing for individualized instruction, monitoring and assessing certain skills while encouraging students to become independent in time management.

Mathematics for the kindergarten class begins each day at the Number Corner. A whole group, interactive lesson follows. The class then breaks into small groups and chooses from several math stations to further explore the math concepts presented. Students also practice collaboration and ways to work in a small group independently, practicing problem-solving skills in a variety of social situations.

Science and social studies units are imbedded throughout the year within the daily course of reading and writing instruction. Students delve deeper into the units of study in the afternoon during Exploration Stations. The kindergarten class learns to question, predict, discuss, compare and draw conclusions.

Choice Time Activity ends the kindergarten day. It provides areas of play for students to develop and hone their social skills. During this time social behaviors are modeled and coached and students learn appropriate ways of solving conflicts. The kindergarten day concludes with an afternoon meeting. The students summarize their learning of the day through a daily discussion. Books are read, songs are sung, sharing occurs, and goodbyes are said. The kindergarten program includes meetings with the art teacher, the French instructor, the music teacher, and the physical education teacher four times each week. They also meet with the librarian once each week for a read aloud and to check out books.

## Language Arts

The kindergarten environment provides bountiful opportunities for communicating, writing and reading within the context of our everyday experiences. The students see written language used daily as we document our daily occurrences through composition, discuss topics of interest, share accounts of our group adventures, and write poetry. Group writing and reading activities support the successful emergence into the world of readers and writers. Students are immersed in reading, writing and speaking opportunities to stretch and grow their knowledge throughout the year. Book making, journal writing, composition and descriptive writing are practices. The difference between fiction and non-fiction literature is examined as they are read aloud. Students recognize the title, author, illustrator and title page of a book. Kindergartners will study Eric Carle, Jim Arnosky, Marcus Pfister, Mo Willems and Donald Crew throughout the year. Kindergarten literacy is designed along the Teachers College model of mini lessons, small group, and independent practice. The emphasis is on meeting each child where they are presently, supporting their knowledge of letter sound associations and sight words. The literacy program strengthens reading comprehension through big books, and supports emergent readers with leveled texts. In addition to the *Phonics and Friends* program, *Words Their Way* gives students practice in beginning and end sounds of words as well as phonemic awareness skills. Each day, students participate in Writer's Workshop. The workshop model for both readers and writers emphasizes releasing responsibility of the task from the teacher to the student in a supported environment providing encouragement, modeling, and guidance.

## Mathematics

Math is a way of understanding and making sense of the world around us. The kindergarten program follows the *Bridges in Mathematics* curriculum. The program incorporates manipulatives, simple art and construction projects, and games along with songs, stories, and poems to help children investigate the world of mathematics. Through meaningful contexts, the children study counting and comparing quantities, sorting, graphing, patterning, 2-dimensional shapes, early addition and subtraction, estimation, measurement and 3-dimensional shapes. Math lessons alternate between whole group instruction and small group and independent investigations during math stations. Students learn how to represent their math thinking and develop dialogue modeled by questioning techniques. The class is taught how to use the games and activities in the math stations most effectively. The math curriculum allows for choice, collaboration and cooperation among students. Each daily math session begins with The Number Corner, an interactive calendar display that introduces and reinforces basic skills. This instruction ensures that youngsters receive consistent practice with sorting, patterning, graphing, counting, comparing, adding, recognizing shapes and coins, as well as telling time and understanding the calendar throughout the year.

## Science and Social Studies

Over the course of the year, children approach learning through thematically based projects. The project approach facilitates students' interactions with other people, objects and the environment in ways that are meaningful to them. Further, this approach includes time for hands-on exploration both inside and outside of the classroom, as experiential learning is vital to kindergarten children. We take advantage of the many natural, physical and social resources in and around the school community.

Language, art, music, mathematics, science and social studies are integrated into the themes being explored. Kindergarten students investigate the plant and animal life of the forest community and how the local forest provides a habitat, niche and role for the organisms that live in and around it. The interrelationships between the plants and animals in the forest community are discovered, as is the impact humans have on this environment.

A study of the physical properties of water takes place during the winter. Students are asked to classify their ideas based upon predictions regarding the properties of water and draw conclusions based upon experimentation. In the spring, students study the human body and its complex systems. Within this context, students compare and contrast the five senses using experiments. Healthy living, including nutrition, exercise and safety are underscored throughout this investigation. In their scientific observations, students make inferences and draw conclusions based upon available evidence and information.

Social studies concepts are woven among the other disciplines whenever appropriate to facilitate student understanding. The year begins with a study on human relations and conflict resolution. The arrival of winter

brings about the opportunity to discuss and engage in projects based on the winter solstice and the ways in which various cultures celebrate the return of sunlight. In the spring, students engaged in mapping their surroundings: their classroom, their school, and their playground. Mapping leads to an examination of the globe as a map of the earth and the ways to interpret that resource. For example, students learn to differentiate landmasses from bodies of water, identify the Polar Regions, and recognize the location of the equator. A study of the globe leads to discussions about the rich diversity of people living there, how they are similar and how they are different from our own community. The conclusion of the year allows for a time of reflection on personal growth.

## **Art**

Art for kindergartners is about discovery and exploration of materials. Students use a wide variety of materials including tempera paint, watercolor, and clay to create both two and three-dimensional artwork. Young artists discover that objects come from different cultures and places. By viewing the works of artists through prints and books, children identify simple subjects and recognize that works of art tell stories and express moods. As students encounter works of art and produce their own works, they begin to understand that people have different responses to similar experiences. Evaluation takes place naturally as kindergartners share ideas about personal art works and the works of others.

## **Music**

The foundation of the Maple Street School music program begins in kindergarten. The music curriculum is comprehensive and developmentally appropriate; incorporating movement, singing, playing instruments, and music appreciation. Play is the primary vehicle for learning and the voice is the central instrument. The goal is that the students become tuneful, artful, and beatful.

Students will perform songs with the entire student body as well as in smaller groups. Concert etiquette as a performer and audience member will be emphasized. In addition to performing, students will attend live performances outside of school.

## **French**

The Lower School French program (K-4) is organized according to units of functional language structures and core vocabulary. These lexical units are structured to build from year to year. The five-year program is cyclical in nature, with each year designed to reinforce and expand on the material learned in previous years. Following established theory on language learning, the program aims to promote the language modes of Listening and Speaking (including Singing); with Reading and Writing incorporated into the program as the students advance in age and experience.

Students in the Kindergarten program are first introduced to French with puppets. They learn to greet each other and the teacher by modeling the routines they see performed by the puppets. Following this initiation, the Kindergarten program is structured so that students progress from the known to the unknown. Beginning with familiar songs, such as the French version of Head, Shoulders, Knees, and Toes, students become increasingly more comfortable with the new language they are learning.

During their first year in the program, Kindergarten French students will master basic greetings, numbers 1-10, simple body parts, basic colors, immediate family members, basic shapes, common fruits and vegetables, selected items of clothing, common domestic and farm animals, as well as common movement commands and classroom directions. A variety of both traditional and contemporary French songs enhance each unit. Pictures, hands-on props and manipulatives, French language recordings, rhythmic chants, movement activities, finger plays, and dramatic activities are commonly used in the lessons.

## **Physical Skills Development**

The kindergarten students take part in a program that will focus on movement education and mastering basic fine and gross motor skills. Much of the curriculum will be presented with emphasis on developing listening and attention skills, and the class will be exposed to a wide variety of cooperative activities and games. Lessons will include fun, age-appropriate activities designed to improve the students' hand-eye coordination, spatial awareness, and rhythmic movement and creativity. Basic principals of physical fitness are presented and a cohesive unit will be

developed through our small group games.

## **Technology**

The classroom computer is available to children at the beginning of the day and during activity time. Our technological goal is to provide activities that supplement student growth and development, and to provide an opportunity to work cooperatively with other students. The children become communicators, collaborators, publishers, producers, information seekers, analyzers and evaluators. They learn responsible and appropriate use of available technology. Programs include basic keyboarding, number and letter recognition, introductory reading and math, and use of problem solving and decision making skills. Additional uses of technology include story writing with teacher or student scribes as well as the use of the library system to check books in and out.

## **Health**

The kindergarten health curriculum provides a base for the development of habits that will maximize the students' physical, emotional, and mental health. As a central component of the primary division's morning meeting schedule, interactive health lessons are implemented using the Vermont state health standards and grade level expectations. Personal and household health and safety, proper hygiene, disease prevention, nutrition, and heart health are main topics. Issues of showing respect, handling emotions effectively, friendships, and social skills are also presented and discussed.

## First Grade

First grade students are eager, observant and curious about their expanding world. Their rapidly-growing abilities allow for collaborative and independent work, in and outside of the classroom. Goals of the first grade curriculum are to develop and strengthen relationships through oral and written language. Students will learn to communicate in order to share information, ideas and feelings. They will deepen their self-esteem and respect for each other and their surroundings. They will use hands-on learning in an environment that encourages active observation, questioning, manipulating and problem solving. Cooperative games, literacy materials, and toys are all a part of the first grade classroom.

First graders attend all-school meetings and primary grade-level meetings, which are an excellent forum for developing a sense of belonging and community. The day in the classroom begins with morning meeting, which gives students a regular opportunity to practice greeting, sharing information, and organizing for the day. The remainder of each morning is devoted to reading and language arts. Mornings may also include French, music, art or P.E. A quiet reading period follows recess each day. Afternoons are devoted to math and science or social studies.

### Language Arts

The language arts curriculum in first grade encourages students to become joyful and enthusiastic readers and writers. Reading comprehension and fluency, phonological and phonetic skills, and writing are important components of this program.

Language arts focuses on students' ownership of the learning process as they move toward independent reading and writing. Through guided reading, students will improve reading fluency. Fluency is a developmental process that allows children to connect decoding skills with their knowledge of words in order to make meaning of text. Careful selection of leveled books for each student will improve their comprehension, along with modeling, coaching and regular assessment. As students make connections to their own lives in their reading, they begin to choose books that are personally meaningful to them, and they continue their journey on a lifelong love of reading.

First graders are exposed to literature by listening to stories read aloud and discussing them in groups and with partners. Students will enjoy books covering topics such as social awareness, love and friendship, and conflict resolution. They will have upper school "reading buddies" who will partner with them once each week to experience books together.

Written language will be integrated throughout the day in first grade, with specific emphasis on thinking strategies, writing mechanics, conventions of print, and syntax. Phonetic skills will be taught using a direct, multi-sensory approach. First graders will develop thinking and writing skills through reading responses, journal entries, poem creations, and more. They will have many opportunities to organize their ideas on paper. They will learn to edit their writing with the goal of improving readers' understanding. First graders may use invented spelling (temporary non-standard spelling) to increase writing fluency, and to gain confidence and pride in their ability to express their ideas in writing. They will gradually move towards mastery of conventional spelling of certain core words as the year progresses.

### Mathematics

Students come to first grade with strong mathematical understandings. Their abilities will be expanded upon through the *Bridges in Mathematics* program. This program uses meaningful contexts such as farm animals, sea creatures, penguins and shapes, to study sorting, counting, graphing, addition, subtraction, place value and measurement. Four units of the year focus on major mathematical concepts (counting, sorting, graphing, measuring, geometry) while two additional units integrate science with math themes as a tool toward learning in context.

Throughout the year, our math program begins with Number Corner, which is an interactive calendar display and set of daily challenges to reinforce basic skills. New concepts are then taught during Problems and Investigations, followed by Work Places, which gives students a chance to practice and master these concepts. Work Places includes games and activities designed for students working alone, with partners, or in small groups. This model

offers choice and opportunity for collaboration, while encouraging students to manage their time and proceed at their own pace.

## **Social Studies**

An important part of our social studies curriculum is developing social competency in a supportive and nurturing classroom setting. We will address personal responsibility, and an understanding of the need for routines and rules in a group setting. Students hone their interpersonal skills through cooperation and problem solving within familiar contexts. First graders are encouraged to play among themselves and to exercise their imaginations in order to practice basic skills of autonomy and cooperation. By age seven years, children develop time (yesterday, today, tomorrow) space and causal connections (if... then.) Thus they will begin to develop and share a more specific personal story with a past and a future, including clearer personal preferences (green is my favorite color.)

First graders' growing awareness of self allows them an understanding of their place in the classroom, the school, and the wider world. Our wider social studies curriculum includes an in-depth investigation of farming and farms in Vermont. We will also study Mexico and the richness inherent in cultural diversity. We will discuss geography, travel, education, values, dress, music and food, comparing those with our own culture. We will also study the seven continents of the world using maps and globes, and compare the ways people live based on their geographic location.

## **Science**

First grade scientists are encouraged to be curious and creative, as they begin their up-close study of the natural world. We begin the year with an exploration of the pond and water (life science.) Students will develop a working knowledge of ecosystems, bodies of water, and seasons. In the winter, we will investigate penguins and their habitat in an integrated math/science unit. In the Spring, we will study farms and farming (earth science) examining plant and animal life cycles, and how we use farm products in our everyday lives. Throughout the year, students will work in the physical sciences, as they build, weigh, measure, sort, sequence, and compare. They will apply the scientific method of questioning, hypothesizing, predicting, investigating and concluding as they work together to make new discoveries.

## **French**

The Lower School French program (K-4) is organized according to units of functional language structures and core vocabulary. These lexical units are structured to build from year to year. The five-year program is cyclical in nature, with each year designed to reinforce and expand on the material learned in previous years. Following established theory on language learning, the program aims to promote the language modes of Listening and Speaking (including Singing); with Reading and Writing incorporated into the program as the students advance in age and experience.

First Graders come into the French program with a sense of familiarity and comfort in the French language, based on what they have mastered from the previous year's program. Revisiting favorite songs from Kindergarten establishes confidence, while allowing a comfortable access point to French at the beginning of the year for new students.

The units that make up the first grade French curriculum are designed to expand the children's lexicon from what they learned the previous year in Kindergarten. First grade students will study numbers 1-20, additional greeting expressions, additional body part vocabulary, selected vocabulary for toys, domestic and jungle animals, verbs for popular sports and leisure activities, selected emotions, selected pairs of opposites, polite words, additional food words, market-shopping vocabulary, expressions for hunger and thirst, expressions to describe morning routines, and a selection of words for modes of transportation and familiar places in a town. A variety of both traditional and contemporary French songs enhance each unit. Pictures, hands-on props and manipulatives, French language recordings, rhythmic chants, movement activities, finger plays, and dramatic activities are commonly used in the lessons.

## **Technology**

Our technology program will address keyboarding and mouse skills, for the purposes of writing and gathering

information. First graders will develop a basic vocabulary for computer hardware and software, which they will use to enrich reading, math and thinking skills. Computer literacy activities will include literacy and math activities, as well as study and reflection on photos or movies from field trips. Students will develop an appreciation of technology as a valuable tool to support learning in school and in life.

## **Homework**

First graders are given homework assignments Monday through Thursday each week, except on days of concerts, special events or holidays. Homework folders will include the assignments for the week, which should take an average of 15 minutes per night to complete. In addition, first graders are asked to spend 15 minutes reading or being read to each night. The purpose of homework in first grade is to develop a sense of personal responsibility and routine. Homework should not cause difficulty or family hardship. Parents/guardians are welcome to send a note or e-mail if homework is unable to be completed on any given day.

## Second Grade

The second grade curriculum is designed to develop and strengthen working relationships; this includes verbal skills for effective expression, and the sharing of information, ideas and feelings. Our goals are to learn to respect one another as well as to develop self-respect in all aspects of work and play. Growing independence and responsibility is also fostered.

Second graders attend all-school meetings and primary grade-level meetings. Returning to the classroom the day begins with our own class “pow-wow” (based on the philosophies of The Responsive Classroom), which provides students with the daily opportunity to practice greetings, conversation, sharing, problem-solving, and motivates them to meet the academic challenges of the day ahead. The rest of our morning is devoted to reading and language arts. Students participate in French, music, art, or P.E. two or three times a week. A 20-minute quiet reading period follows recess. Our afternoons consist of math and science or social studies.

### Language Arts

In second grade, students partake in a balanced literacy program. Strategies are integrated throughout the curriculum to improve students’ reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills.

Students’ reading skills are developed through a literature based program. Read-aloud books are used to introduce reading comprehension methods to all students as well as to examine the characteristics of a specific genre. Guided reading, and the choosing of “just right books” enables students to work on strategies at an independent reading level. Reader’s Theatre and weekly poetry are utilized to reinforce fluency. Classroom book talks help create lifelong readers as students learn to analyze and appreciate literature. Classroom literature sets, such as *Horrible Harry and the Drop of Doom* (Suzy Kline), *Cam Jansen and the Mystery of the Babe Ruth Baseball* (David A. Adler), *Freckle Juice* (Judy Blume), *The Chalk Box Kid* (Clyde Robert Bulla), *My Father’s Dragon* (Ruth Stiles Gannett), *The Stories Julian Tells* (Ann Cameron), *Catwings* (Ursula K. Le Guin) and others, are used to foster comprehension and vocabulary.

*All About Spelling*, and the multi-sensory concepts of the *Orton-Gillingham Approach to Teaching Reading, Writing, and Spelling*, guide our review of phonics skills, which are further refined through games, activities, and application to students’ current reading texts. Sight word instruction, vocabulary, and grammar rules are introduced through continuous exposure and practice. Journal writing is a weekly part of the classroom experience. Students continue to learn how to express themselves while writing in various forms. Second graders explore many genres of writing while using mentor texts as examples. They also learn how to gather their own writing ideas. Some of these ideas are nurtured into published pieces, which are celebrated through the use of an “Author’s Chair.” Students are introduced to editing and revising, and learn how to use a primary dictionary, as they work through the writing process. The *Zaner-Bloser* manuscript handwriting program is also used to help children learn correct letter formation.

Because listening is essential to language development, interactive read-alouds are utilized throughout the curriculum to engage students. Grand conversations and questioning are also implemented across content-area topics to support higher-level thinking and to stimulate purposeful talk.

### Mathematics

*Bridges in Mathematics* serves as a guide to the scope and sequence of the Maple Street curriculum. It is a conceptually oriented and activity-based program which facilitates the development of students’ mathematical thinking and reasoning abilities by providing age-appropriate Problems and Investigations in such areas as number, geometry, probability, data analysis, patterning, and measurement. Children are encouraged to explore, develop, test, discuss, and apply mathematical ideas while participating in authentic investigations. The second grade program features seven units of study. These units emphasize patterns and functions, story problems, addition and subtraction strategies, and geometry over the fall and winter months. By spring, the focus shifts to place value, statistics and probability, fractions, and operations with large numbers.

There are three components to the *Bridges* program in second grade. Students participate in Problems and Investigations, which are whole group lessons that teach key skills and concepts in the context of problem solving, as

well as Work Places, which consist of games and activities designed to provide for choice, collaboration, and cooperation among students. Number Corner, an interactive calendar that provides consistent practice with facts to 20, place value, counting, 2- and 3- digit addition and subtraction, money, time, measuring, sorting, and patterning, is also incorporated into the daily routine.

## **Social Studies**

During the fall term, second grade students compare the lives and historical contributions of Native Americans. Through hands-on explorations and classroom read-alouds, they discover how the daily lives of these Indians were effected by the geographic regions they resided in. Students learn how to locate these geographic regions on a map of the United States and compared their climate, land, and plant life. They also gather information on the food, clothing, homes, occupations, and transportation methods of these people. Students learn about the contributions Native Americans have made to present-day life, including their respect for nature, legends and stories, farming, and art forms (jewelry pottery, and weaving). As a culminating project for this unit, second graders used the computer to take an online quiz on each of the geographic regions we study.

In early winter, students study the culture of ancient and modern China. Topics of interest include the beliefs, customs, food, language, and history of the Chinese people. Students learn hands-on, gaining an appreciation of the Chinese culture through its literature, art, and music. Maple Street artifacts and nonfiction trade books foster this experience. During this unit of study, students have the opportunity to participate in Chinese cooking, brush painting, paper cutting, and calligraphy. They also partake in a Reader's Theatre performance about China.

To help students gain an appreciation of famous Americans during the spring term, each second grader selects an individual from United States History to research. Children are instructed to read a biography at their independent level, take notes, and write a research paper on the famous American that he/she selects. Report includes information on the individual's childhood, adult life, and his/her accomplishments and contributions to American history. Second grade students orally present their reports, in costume, at a Biography Breakfast in June for their parents.

In addition to the social studies curriculum this year, students will also partake in *Evan Moor's Daily Geography Practice*. Daily lessons will introduce children to a variety of maps, basic geography skills, and terms.

## **Science**

Students begin the second grade year with a study of insects. Utilizing a science journal to record their observations, they explore the Maple Street Meadow to discover the plants and insects that live there. Children learn about the life cycles and roles of honeybees, ladybugs, butterflies, and crickets. They also increase their understanding of ants during unit two of the *Bridges* math program. While studying insects, a field trip to Hildene helps students "foster respect, understanding, and delight in the natural world" as well as an appreciation for the environment. Insect research reports introduce second grade students to nonfiction reading and writing.

During the spring, students study simple machines. They investigate gears, pulleys, levers, inclined planes, screws, wedges, and wheels-and-axles. Students experiment with everyday models of the machines and learn about the concepts of force, friction, and work. As a culminating project for this unit, students visit the Mill Museum in Weston, adjacent to the Farrar-Mansur House, to tour the sawmill and gristmill. While visiting, children view an extensive collection of early trade tools and equipment used in Vermont farming, cheese making, coopering, blacksmithing, woodworking, weaving, and tinsmithing.

## **Art**

In second grade, students develop additional skills in perception and recognize simple characteristics of space and distance. Examining natural and human made objects provides students with visual information that increases experimentation in their own work. Drawing and painting animals allows for exploration of texture and neutral colors.

Students develop designs by creating interesting combinations and patterns, colors, forms and lines. Second graders draw with soft pencils, pastels and colored pencils. In painting they develop ideas by inventive combinations of line, form and color. They explore spatial concepts in drawing, painting and printmaking. Students create collages with a

variety of papers and found materials. Fibers are explored by weaving natural fibers and found objects in simple looms. Children make three-dimensional works by molding with clay, and constructing sculptures with paper and wood.

By viewing and discussing the works of others, students discover that artists have expressed similar ideas differently in different times, places and cultures. In viewing works by other artists, second grade students will be encouraged to describe differences in two dimensional artwork of the same genre, such as drawings or paintings, and three dimensional art works, such as pottery, sculpture and architecture. Art work is evaluated in class where students are asked to listen attentively to discussion, share their own ideas and show respect for the ideas of others. Art vocabulary is developed through discussion of art prints and student work.

## **Music**

Students will continue to sing and play instruments and will begin to read music notation. Rhythmic and tonal syllables will be used to connect notation to sound and develop music literacy. Improvisation will shift from a focus on movement to a focus on tonal and rhythmic patterns. The goal is that the students become tuneful, artful, and beautiful.

Students will learn about several major composers and one of each of their works. They will learn to identify instruments of the orchestra by sight and sound.

Students will perform songs with the entire student body as well as in smaller groups. Concert etiquette as a performer and audience member will be emphasized. In addition to performing, students will attend live performances outside of school.

## **French**

The Lower School French program (K-4) is organized according to units of functional language structures and core vocabulary. These lexical units are structured to build from year to year. The five-year program is cyclical in nature, with each year designed to reinforce and expand on the material learned in previous years. Following established theory on language learning, the program aims to promote the language modes of Listening and Speaking (including Singing); with Reading and Writing incorporated into the program as the students advance in age and experience.

Second graders study new French vocabulary through a sequence of thematic questions. For example, one unit introduces the question "*Qu'est-ce que tu fais?*" (What are you doing?) as an introduction to asking about activities. Organizing the curriculum in this way allows for both a natural context for asking and answering questions using familiar vocabulary, as well as a fresh opportunity to learn new structures and terms. The students are synthesizing what they have learned in phase one (K-2) of the Lower School French program, and are preparing for work they will experience in the second phase (3-4).

Second graders will complete their third year in the program by reviewing material from the First grade units as well as studying the following: greetings, family members, and pets, common classroom words, additional animals, vocabulary for asking about activities, expressing activities they like and dislike, additional food vocabulary, numbers to 30, expressing age, and structures for asking and describing what someone would like. Activities from the French program *Alex et Zoé* will be used to support the second grade lexical units. A variety of both traditional and contemporary French songs enhance the units.

## **Physical Skills Development**

As second graders, our students will continue to express themselves through movement and vigorous physical activity, as they develop a stronger repertoire of gross and fine motor skills. Age-appropriate equipment and activities are used to practice all sport and hand-eye coordination skills. Cooperation and working well with classmates while in small groups are common themes in our lessons. The class will regularly take part in cooperative games, and they will begin to further understand the value of physical fitness and forming habits for a healthy lifestyle.

## **Technology**

Our technology program is designed to familiarize the students with the computer and the use of the keyboard as well as various programs that reinforce reading, math, and thinking skills. In the second half of the year, second grade students are introduced to a variety of computer programs and tools while working in literary centers. Students will learn how to use *Kidspiration* to organize information.

## **Health**

The second grade health curriculum provides a base for the development of habits that will maximize the students' physical, emotional, and mental health. As a central component of the primary division's morning meeting schedule, interactive health lessons are implemented using the Vermont state health standards and grade level expectations. Personal and household health and safety, proper hygiene, disease prevention, nutrition, and heart health are main topics. Issues of showing respect, handling emotions effectively, friendships, and social skills are also presented and discussed.

## **Homework**

In order to reinforce what is being learned in class, and to help second grade students develop independent study skills, students are expected to spend 20 minutes on homework each night. This usually consists of math and literacy practice. Another 15 minutes is expected for independent reading.

## Third Grade

Third grade is an age of discovery and exploration. The third grade curriculum is designed to support and guide students through this period. In the third grade, basic math and language arts skills are reviewed and reinforced, and new concepts are presented. The emphasis is on the student gaining confidence in his or her own reading, writing, mathematical, visual, verbal, and kinesthetic skills so they will become tools for use in all areas of the child's learning. Students are enjoined to develop communication skills, which will help them create and sustain a socially comfortable environment in the classroom.

### Language Arts

Enjoyment of reading is encouraged through many channels. Part of each day is devoted to the *Daily Four*: Reading to Self, Reading to Someone, Listening to Reading, and Writing about Reading. In addition, the teacher reads aloud each day; to model a comprehension skill as part of a mini-lesson, from an "Author Study" (reading and discussing a number of books by the same author), or from fiction and non-fiction books related to our thematic units. Some of the class fiction selections for third grade are: *The Canada Geese Quilt* (Kinsey-Warnock), *Charlotte's Web* (White), *Dear Mr. Henshaw* (Cleary), and *Love That Dog* (Creech). In addition, a focus on the genre of fairy tales will give the students the opportunity to do a comparative analysis of the tales. This will be modeled through the study of different versions of *Cinderella*. Attention is given to writing styles, plot development and sequencing, characterization, setting, and vocabulary development. All children will regularly experience, as both readers and composers, many kinds of poetry. Guided Reading will be used during science and social studies to better comprehend informational text. Once a week, students will read to a Kindergarten reading buddy and do a project that identifies the storytelling elements in a book.

Students will engage in a variety of writing assignments given throughout their day. They will use the writing process; brainstorm, organize information and ideas using graphic organizers, draft, conference, revise, edit and publish. Students will complete at least two research projects during the school year. In addition to writing about their reading, they will also write in a personal journal once a week. The students will have instruction in grammar, usage, and mechanics through the *G.U.M.* text. Third graders will use the *All About Spelling* program, which is a phonetically-based approach, and will use the Zaner-Bloser handwriting program for cursive writing.

### Mathematics

The Math Learning Center's *Bridges*, is the core of the mathematics curriculum. This program focuses on the conceptual understanding and the development of efficient strategies for problem solving. Instruction features a blend of whole-group, small-group, and independent activities which create opportunities for student led discussion of strategies. *Bridges* facilitates the development of children's mathematical thinking and reasoning abilities by providing age-appropriate problems and investigations in the areas of number, algebraic thinking, geometry, probability, data analysis, and measurement. The third grade curriculum reinforces the mathematical concepts and computational skills achieved in grades K-2 and focuses on the central mathematical themes in grades 3-5, which are multiplicative reasoning, equivalence, and computational fluency. Emphasis is placed on cementing automaticity in the addition and subtraction facts and on learning the multiplication tables in this year. Students are encouraged to explore, develop, test, discuss, and apply ideas; to see mathematics as something that is fluid, vibrant, creative, and relevant.

### Social Studies

Students will be introduced to modern-day Egypt before delving into a study of Ancient Egypt. By taking an investigative and discovery approach students will find out how climate and geography affect the way in which these people live(d). Through researching Egyptian mythology and hieroglyphs, children will discover the many aspects of daily life in the Nile Valley thousands of years ago. In studying Ancient Egypt, students will learn about the achievements and history of this early civilization, its language, government, and knowledge of mathematics and science. Materials from museum collections will enhance the unit by allowing a study of artifacts.

In the second unit, third graders will learn about the land, people and culture of Brazil. Fiction and nonfiction will be used to tell the story of these unique people, their diverse geographical environment, and the way they live. Art,

dance, and music will be used to illustrate their culture.

The development of geography skills will coincide with the studies of Egypt and Brazil. Students will work with maps and atlases using keys and legends to locate places, identify climate zones, continents and oceans, population centers, and areas of industry. In addition, students will become familiar with the location of the countries in Central America, South America, the Middle East, and NE Africa, which are in proximity to Brazil and Egypt respectively.

## **Science**

The year will start and end with the study of rivers and streams. This year's storm provides us with the opportunity to take a close look at flooding and erosion. Students will measure and record water conditions in two locations. Samples of plants, insects, and soil will be collected and brought back to the classroom to be studied with hand-lenses and microscopes. The effect of pollutants on the plants and animals that inhabit a watershed will also be studied. Students will be able to identify the elements of the water cycle. We will read *The River Runs Wild* (Cherry) to follow the history of a river.

In our second unit students will learn about electricity and magnetism. They will explore with magnets, batteries and bulbs in an inquiry based approach. Students will read and discuss a biography of Thomas Edison, *Thomas Alva Edison-Young Inventor* (Sabin). Discussions will promote students' understanding of the different ways of producing energy. The importance of safely using electricity will also be covered.

During our study of Brazil, the students will learn about the rainforest ecosystem and the plants and animals that inhabit it. They will create a Keynote report on a rain forest animal and use a Webquest to research the uses of a rain forest plant.

## **Art**

Students observe and record their perceptions of the environment, refining and embellishing visual symbols through increased awareness of visual detail. By telling stories and remembering events, they expand visual thinking to include life experiences and imagination as sources for art ideas. In discussion, they explore such qualities as the feeling of color, the attitude of form, and the excitement of line. Third graders create original two and three-dimensional artwork with a wide variety of materials such as tempera paint, oil pastels, soft pastels and aquarelles on large paper. Themes include ideas about themselves, memories and events in their lives. Appropriate three dimensional materials include paper, wood, clay and found objects. Students create designs by inventing complex patterns and combinations of line, form and color.

Students make puppets in connection with their classroom study of fairytales.

## **Music**

Students in this age group are ready for challenges in their music curriculum. They will perform canons and may sing harmonies. An emphasis is placed on proper vocal technique, breathing, and correct vowel pronunciation. Students will learn about several major composers and one of each of their works.

Recorder instruction begins in third grade. Students will continue to connect notation to sound using rhythmic and tonal syllables in their instrumental and vocal instruction. The "recorder karate" program motivates students to master songs of increasing levels of difficulty in order to earn "belts." Students will identify woodwind and brass instruments by sight and sound and learn specifically how each instrument produces a tone.

Students will perform with the entire student body as well as in smaller groups. Concert etiquette as a performer and audience member will be emphasized. In addition to performing, students will attend live performances outside of school.

## **French**

The Lower School French program (K-4) is organized according to units of functional language structures and core vocabulary. These lexical units are structured to build from year to year. The five-year program is cyclical in nature, with each year designed to reinforce and expand on the material learned in previous years. Following established

theory on language learning, the program aims to promote the language modes of Listening and Speaking (including Singing); with Reading and Writing incorporated into the program as the students advance in age and experience.

Third graders enter the second phase (3-4) of the Lower School French program. Beginning in this year, there is a greater focus on reading and writing, in addition to the listening and speaking activities. Third graders study new French vocabulary through a sequence of thematic questions. For example, one unit introduces the question “*Qu’est-ce que tu aimes?*” (What do you like?) as an introduction to asking about foods. Organizing the curriculum in this way allows for both a natural context for asking and answering questions using familiar vocabulary, as well as a fresh opportunity to learn new structures and terms. Additionally during this year, the vocabulary that students have mastered is put to use in more complicated scenarios than those the students have seen previously. For example: by building of off colors and clothing, they learn to describe a person, as well as to pay attention to the different sounds for masculine and feminine.

Students will review material from earlier units as part of learning their new units, including: getting to know people, expressing age, school vocabulary, talking about extracurricular activities, numbers to 50, expressing needs, describing people, discussing likes and dislikes, clothing words, French breakfast foods, food shopping, and telling time on the hour. Activities from the French program *Alex et Zoé* will supplement the third grade lexical units. A variety of both traditional and contemporary French songs enhance the units.

### **Physical Skills Development**

The third grade class will increase emphasis on the development of their personal fitness levels. Cooperative activities and group challenges are a regular occurrence in our class, as are fun group games. Sport skills using manipulatives are taught with increased awareness of body mechanics in preparation for the increased exposure to various team and individual sports. Group and team tactics are introduced as well. Finally, hand in hand with this introduction to competition, the values of respect and good sportsmanship are instilled in our students.

### **Technology**

Third graders will use specific approved websites on the classroom’s computers to reinforce skills. Using the cart of laptops, students are introduced to the use of search engines on the Internet. Students will use the *Kidspiration* and *KidPix* programs to create story webs and illustrations, organize information, and demonstrate their understanding of a math concept. They will also be introduced to *Keynote* as a method of sharing research in a visual manner for a larger audience. Students will experience a variety of computer programs and tools while working with their upper school computer buddies. They will also use Webquests and bookmarked websites to explore a science or social studies topic in depth. They will learn how to organize their projects on their desktop and how to access the third grade’s folder on the server. .

### **Health**

Issues covered for the third grade include friendship, privacy, self-concept, and human traits and characteristics. We will also discuss peer, family and sibling relationships and handling difficult emotional and social situations. Good nutrition and a healthy body are also emphasized.

### **Homework**

Approximately 30-40 minutes of homework are expected to be done Monday through Thursday nights. An additional 15-20 minutes should be spent reading from a classroom novel or an independent reading book.

## Fourth Grade

Fourth grade is a year of transition as students balance on the cusp: the eldest of the lower school, but still developing skills that will enable them to make a smooth transition into middle school next year. This is an exciting time as students move into more advanced territory in their reading: “reading to learn,” no longer “learning to read.” Students will be integrating reading skills with science, social studies and math. They will read from many different types of texts, as well as develop a better sense of what they like to read for pleasure. Skills of analyzing and comparing are emphasized as fourth graders attempt to answer more “how” and “why” questions in all areas of the curriculum. Fourth grade offers more opportunities for taking responsibility and developing independence in their class work, homework, and friendships. The various projects and assignments we do will encourage students to take healthy risks both academically and socially and to raise their awareness so that they see themselves as part of a bigger classroom, school and global community. They will work on interpersonal skills such as ‘active listening’ and other communication skills that enable them to maintain a safe, respectful and supportive classroom environment.

Students will set academic, personal and social goals for themselves, returning to those goals throughout the year to revise and reflect.

### Language Arts

Fourth grade celebrates the joy of independent reading. Whole and small group discussion of monthly class reading selections, such as *My Side of the Mountain* (George), *Mrs. Frisby and the Rats of NIMH* (O’Brien), *The Cricket in Times Square* (Shelden), *Sadako and the Thousand Paper Cranes* (Coerr), will explore theme, plot, imagery, point of view, and vocabulary. A reading response journal will cultivate good reading skills such as prediction, personal understanding, and question formulation. Inter-disciplinary study and reading for knowledge is an integral part of the social studies and science programs, as several language arts books will overlap with the study of mountains and Japan. Reading for pleasure occurs at home, for 20 minutes each evening, and silently in school during the daily DEAR period. Exposure is encouraged to a wide variety of genre.

Periodic short book logs, in the form of library recommendations, will help fourth graders summarize the main components of their reading. Good sentence and paragraph writing will be emphasized through weekly vocabulary and grammar exercises, as well as through short research projects. The grammar text, *Easy Grammar*, which includes practice with parts of speech, basic parts of a sentence, punctuation, and proper word usage will be utilized. Spelling is taught weekly through a phonics and rules-based program.

To maintain cursive writing skills begun in third grade, students will work independently in the *Zaner-Bloser* handwriting workbook. Creative story and poetry writing is at times coordinated with class studies, as well as through regular writing prompts.

### Mathematics

The *Bridges* program comprises the core of the fourth grade math curriculum. Three themes of multiplicative reasoning, equivalence, and computational fluency, play a major role in this year’s mathematics study. The year opens with a review of multiplication and division. Late fall, students study geometry by exploring 2- and 3-dimensional shapes, symmetry, congruence, and transformations. Mid-year, fourth graders explore concepts of probability by collecting data, graphing, and analyzing their information. Additionally, the program provides a regular focus on developing efficient problem solving strategies. Competency with basic math facts is emphasized throughout the year.

### Social Studies

Completing the cycle begun last year, in our first unit, students will learn about the land, people and culture of Brazil. Fiction and nonfiction will be used to tell the story of these unique people, their diverse geographical environment and the way they live. Art, dance, and a drumming unit, coordinated with the music department, will be used to illustrate their culture.

This winter, students will be introduced to a study of Egypt, both modern day and ancient. Through an investigative and discovery approach students will find out how climate and geography affect the way in which these

people live(d). Through researching Egyptian mythology and hieroglyphs, children will discover the many aspects of daily life in the Nile Valley thousands of years ago. In studying Ancient Egypt, students will learn about the achievements and history of this early civilization, its language, government, and knowledge of mathematics and science. Materials from museum collections will enhance the unit by allowing a study of artifacts.

The development of geography skills will coincide with the studies of Brazil and Egypt. Students will work with maps and atlases using keys and legends to locate places, identify climate zones, continents and oceans, population centers, and areas of industry. In addition, fourth graders will learn the location of the 50 United States.

## **Science**

There will be three units of study in fourth grade science beginning with an exploration of Newtonian physics, of motion from potential to kinetic energy. Building a battery operated car will complete this study. A study of the five human body systems, the digestive, respiratory, skeletal, nervous, and endocrine, will be examined. Finally, in the spring the mountain unit will be comprised of how mountains are formed and their different classifications. Activities will include collecting and observing species of plants and animals at the base and peak of the mountain. We will climb a local mountain to make our collections.

## **Art**

Fourth graders use a wide variety of materials to produce works in drawing, painting, printmaking, fibers and ceramics. Students combine media to express their ideas. They use mirrors to create self-portraits and model for each other to draw figures. Fourth graders make pottery and ceramic sculpture with methods such as slab, coil and pinch. Materials used in sculpture include clay, wood, cardboard and combinations of these materials. Children develop three-dimensional works such as “hero” dolls and sculpture.

Fourth graders compare the works of artists from a variety of times and places who expressed similar themes about life experiences. By viewing prints and reproductions or visiting museums, students identify and compare the ways artists have documented and reflected our culture, history and traditions. Describing intent, forming conclusions and expressing opinions in discussions provide the basis for informal evaluation of artwork.

## **Music**

Students in fourth grade will sing canons and harmonies. An emphasis is placed on proper vocal technique, breathing, and correct vowel pronunciation. They will learn about several major composers and one of each of their works.

Each student is encouraged to choose a band instrument to play and will learn techniques appropriate to their instrument. Students will connect notation to sound using rhythmic and tonal syllables on their instrument. They will continue to play recorder in class and will begin to compose short pieces in their own handwriting.

Students will perform with the entire student body as well as in smaller groups. Concert etiquette as a performer and audience member will be emphasized. In addition to performing, students will attend live performances outside of school.

## **French**

The Lower School French program (K-4) is organized according to units of functional language structures and core vocabulary. These lexical units are structured to build from year to year. The five-year program is cyclical in nature, with each year designed to reinforce and expand on the material learned in previous years. Following established theory on language learning, the program aims to promote the language modes of Listening and Speaking (including Singing); with Reading and Writing incorporated into the program as the students advance in age and experience.

Fourth graders are in the second phase (3-4) of the Lower School French program. Continuing from third grade, there is a greater focus on reading and writing, in addition to the listening and speaking activities. Fourth graders study new French vocabulary through a sequence of thematic questions. For example, one unit introduces the

question “Qui est-ce?” (Who is it?) as an introduction to lessons on people. Organizing the curriculum in this way allows for both a natural context for asking and answering questions using familiar vocabulary, as well as a fresh opportunity to learn new structures and terms.

In the fourth grade year, students will review material from the third grade units in addition to the following fourth grade vocabulary units: telling time, daily activities using selected reflexive verbs, the days of the week, the months of the year, expressing one’s birthday, family members, numbers to 60, describing people, school subjects, weather expressions, stating how one is feeling, and ordering food in a café scenario. Activities from the three-year French program *Alex et Zoé (Alex and Zoe)* will supplement the fourth grade lexical units. A variety of both traditional and contemporary French songs enhance the units.

## **Physical Skills Development**

The fourth grade class will increase emphasis on the development of their personal fitness levels. Cooperative activities and group challenges are a regular occurrence in our class, as are fun group games. Sport skills using manipulatives are taught with increased awareness of body mechanics in preparation for the increased exposure to various team and individual sports. Group and team tactics are introduced as well. Finally, hand in hand with this introduction to competition, the values of respect and good sportsmanship are instilled in our students.

## **Technology**

The fourth grade incorporates computer use into various appropriate areas of study. It will be used as a research guide using programs that specifically address subject areas. Students will use the Internet to research selected web sites and further investigate curriculum units of study. The computer will be used to facilitate problem solving and data interpretation through the use of computer generated charts and graphs.

Fourth graders will also be given introductory typing instruction through the use of the *Type to Learn* program.

Keyboarding skills will be practiced throughout the year. Using the *Kidspiration* and *Inspiration* programs, students will learn how to use computer generated graphic organizers in order to develop, sequence and organize ideas for writing assignments. Beginning in January, word processing skills will be taught and students will have opportunities to practice these skills by typing and editing selected written works. Students will develop their skills at presenting their work by using the *Keynote* and/or *Power Point* programs. Fourth graders will become creative and effective users of the school’s technology tools, and will be introduced to the proper maintenance and operation of a computer. Emphasis will be placed on teaching fourth graders to be responsible users of technology, and for them to understand the consequences of the inappropriate use of information and technology.

## **Health**

The fourth grade health curriculum is centered on the Vermont state health standards and grade level expectations. Through biweekly interactive classroom lessons, issues of personal health and safety, first aid, and maintaining healthy nutritional habits are emphasized. Students explore introductory issues surrounding the risks of alcohol use, smoking, and exposure to second-hand smoke. Students continue to develop productive social skills, empathy, and methods for handling strong feelings and emotions effectively. An introduction to internet safety is also presented. A study of the main body systems is presented to students through the grade 4 science and physical education curricula.

## **Homework**

Students are expected to spend 45 minutes on homework four nights a week. A minimum of an additional 20 minutes reading is required. Students have a homework folder with an assignment planner. They also keep a reading log of their independent reading choices.

## Fifth Grade

Fifth grade is the entry level into the upper school at Maple Street. It is a transition year when students: 1) assume increased responsibility for their academic work in school and at home; 2) learn to adjust to a greater number of teachers; 3) join the Student Council and an advisory with a mix of students from each upper school grade; 4) become involved in community service; and 5) experience overnight class trips for the first time. At this age, students gain an increased awareness of one's self in the world, which also opens the door to a greater understanding of individual learning styles and personal responsibility. In a student-centered, nurturing environment, Maple Street fifth graders are given the support necessary to help them grow emotionally, socially, and academically, with the goal of ensuring a smooth transition year.

### English

Fifth graders' study of English focuses on the following elements:

*Reading Comprehension* – Through a variety of novels that include such titles as *The Great Gilly Hopkins*, *Maniac Magee*, *Tuck Everlasting*, *Bridge to Terabithia*, and *Number the Stars*, as well as different short stories and poetry, an emphasis is placed on strategies that allow students to think more deeply about the text by predicting, self-monitoring comprehension, acquiring new vocabulary, making connections, summarizing, inferring, as well as synthesizing, evaluating, and applying information. In addition, fifth graders explore various genres and literary elements such as setting, plot, character development, conflict, climax, resolution, theme, and point of view. Literary devices, including simile, metaphor, and personification are also explored as a means to understanding the author's purpose and storytelling craft.

*Vocabulary Development* – Using the series *Wordly Wise*, students expand their vocabulary through weekly vocabulary units and corresponding tests. This series, which includes valuable online activities and study aides, is used in grades 5 through 8 and builds on students' prior knowledge of word study strategies to help them develop a strong vocabulary foundation.

*Writing* – Throughout the year, students explore the various genres of descriptive, narrative and expository writing. Modeled instruction, which emphasizes such elements as descriptive language, varied sentence structure, consistency of verb tenses, transition words and organization of thoughts, offers students the opportunity to recognize and strive for quality writing while still expressing their own voice. Assignments are structured according to the writing process: brainstorming, drafting, proofreading, revising, and completing a final copy. Students create several different essays that include narrative, summary, memoir, and persuasive writing. In addition, a poetry unit focuses on another distinct form of writing, as a means for understanding an author's message, exploring figurative language, and providing a creative outlet for student expression. Grammar and punctuation are taught separately, as well as in conjunction with the writing process. Spelling is taught through a rules-based approach.

*Test Taking and Study Skills* – Through class work and consistent homework assignments, students review test-taking strategies to help prepare them for such standardized tests as the ERB. These skills focus on reading comprehension questions that test main idea, making inferences, author's purpose, etc., as well as grammar, proofreading, and writing concepts.

*Technology* – Students use such software programs as *Keynote* (similar to PowerPoint), *Microsoft Word* (word processing) and *Type to Learn* (with the goal of typing 30 words per minute by year's end so that students are prepared to obtain their personal computers in sixth grade).

*Presentation Skills* – Through book talks, literature circle discussions, written essays, research projects, and dramatic interpretation, students are given the opportunity to practice their oral communication skills. Voice projection, appropriate inflection, proper pacing, attentive listening, response to peers, and sharing of reflections help students grow as public speakers and active listeners.

### Math

The Fifth grade year in mathematics transitions the students from the standards based program, *Bridges in*

*Mathematics*, to a skill based program, *Holt Mathematics: Course 1* (Holt, Rinehart and Winston 2007). Main concepts are broken into small increments allowing students to build and strengthen their conceptual understanding of mathematics while improving their efficiency as mathematicians. The twelve units of study are whole numbers and patterns, introduction to algebra, decimals, number theory and fractions, collecting and displaying data, proportional relationships, geometric relationships, measurement and geometry, area and volume, integers, graphs, and functions, and probability.

Each class session begins with a warm-up problem that readies the students for the math content. Students engage in daily opportunities to improve their math fact fluency and accuracy. The fifth grade has one math lab per week. This time is used to support and enrich operational understandings as well as promote problem solving techniques and strategies.

Students spend time during class to practice the explored content and complete independent practice on a daily basis. Formative assessments are conducted throughout each chapter to determine levels of understanding. Students are encouraged to develop plans to solidify the math content explored. Final chapter tests are administered to determine levels of mastery.

## **History**

Fifth grade history begins the first of a two-year study of Western Civilization. In this academic year we focus on the Ancient Greek and Roman civilizations. Students learn to comprehend both primary and secondary historical texts through discussions on how to approach different sources. A look at the art, culture, food, history, lore, literature, and philosophy of the ancient world is done through a variety of age appropriate texts and simulated alternating years events such as staging a mini-Greek Olympics and producing a period play. A spring research paper teaches the research process from thesis, to an outline and note taking, to a finished draft.

## **Science**

Fifth grade students begin their science experience with an in-depth study of bacteria and plants. Students gain an understanding of the smallest living creatures, and develop ways to analyze ecosystems and the contributions of the very smallest organisms. Utilizing the trail system on the grounds behind the school, we will be developing an outdoor classroom area in order to maximize our hands-on experience. Then, fifth graders will pursue studying more complex organisms in a special unit on animals. We will perform a series of experiments to connect our learning from small, microscopic organisms to larger complex ones. In the spring, we will explore sound and light, also connected to animals and how our Vermont landscape begins to wake up after the wintertime. Primary texts for these units are from Prentice Hall's Middle School Science Explorer series. Students will develop the following scientific skills as a foundation to their learning:

- Classify: use characteristics to group objects into groups based on shared properties.
- Question and Predict: ask questions and make predictions about the natural world that can be tested.
- Experiment: plan and conduct simple investigations, knowing what is to be compared or what information is sought.
- Observe and Measure: extend observations and make measurements using simple science tools; i.e., hand lens, rulers, and balances.
- Collect and Record Data: recognize simple patterns in data and use data to formulate reasonable explanations for the results of an investigation.
- Draw Conclusions: communicate observations, results, and explanations through discussions, drawings, models, graphs, and writing.
- Note-taking – from both texts and class instructions
- Outlining and organization
- Finding information in multiple types of resources; i.e., books, magazines, encyclopedias, electronic media

## **Physical Skills Development**

The fifth graders are involved with a program of vigorous physical activity through continued fitness work and fitness testing combined with fun cooperative activities and group initiatives. They will be exposed to a wide variety

of team and individual sports, with an increased focus on application of skills to game-related situations. Working well with classmates and teammates is an essential requirement for successful completion of the fifth grade P.E. program. Finally, there will be regularly scheduled group games, which will take place in between each sport skill unit.

## Art

Fifth graders use a variety of materials to develop original art works in two and three dimensions. Art works reflect more complexity than in earlier years, and students become more attentive to detail. Students handle tools and material with increased precision. In addition to individual work in drawing and painting, collaborative work may include large assemblages in sculpture, or ceramic murals. Materials for three-dimensional works include clay, papier-mâché, wire, found objects and combinations of these media. Fifth graders refine their techniques in printmaking, pottery and ceramic sculpture. Weaving on simple looms help students strengthen their awareness of texture, color and design. Fifth graders' design decisions are the result of conscious, thoughtful choices rather than intuitive actions.

Students analyze and compare work by American artists and artists of other nationalities. Students connect with classroom studies as they create work inspired by the Olympic images seen on Greek urns. Fifth graders describe intent, form conclusions, and express opinions when evaluating personal works and the works of others. Students also speculate about mood and theme when interpreting and evaluating art.

## Music

In fifth grade, students will continue to sing canons, harmonies, and ostinati. An emphasis is placed on proper vocal technique, breathing, and correct vowel pronunciation. The study of songs will highlight lyrics and musical form. Students will learn about several major composers and one of each of their works.

Each student is encouraged to choose a band instrument to play and will learn techniques appropriate to their instrument. Students will connect notation to sound using rhythmic and tonal syllables in both vocal and instrumental performance. They will continue to play recorder in class, compose in their own handwriting and using Sibelius computer software, and record their performance using GarageBand.

Students will perform with the entire student body as well as in smaller groups. Concert etiquette as a performer and audience member will be emphasized. In addition to performing, students will attend live performances outside of school.

Fifth grade students are offered the opportunity to participate in Concert Band and Chorus as electives.

## French

The Upper School French Program is designed to give students the grammatical and vocabulary base, as well as the language learning habits, which they will need in order to be successful in secondary school French courses. The fifth grade program is a transition year from the lexical unit arrangement of the Lower School French Program. Students are transitioning to the Upper School French Program's structured grammatical and vocabulary study that they will need to become accustomed to in order to flourish linguistically as they continue with French. The program focuses on building the four essential language modes of Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing.

The fifth grade will work with the middle school French textbook *C'est à toi!* They will study the following: subject pronouns, conjugation of *-er* verbs, placement of adverbs, leisure and sports terms, negative statements, time, the verb *aller* (to go) and expressions that use *aller*, gender of nouns, definite and indefinite articles, *café* foods and expressions, numbers to 100, prepositions, classroom and school vocabulary, as well as the verb *avoir* (to have) and expressions that use *avoir*. Fifth grade students should expect to have homework frequently in French class (1-2 times/week) with weekend homework assignments starting in January. They will study for a quiz once a week, and will have tests at the end of each unit. In-class and homework activities will include listening and repeating exercises; speaking practice, partner information-gap speaking activities; creating, practicing and performing dialogues; and weekly reading and writing exercises. The students will be assessed through written quizzes and tests as well as their work on oral communication projects presented in class.

## **Technology**

The fifth graders use MacBook computers on a weekly basis to facilitate touch-typing, speed, and accuracy on the keyboard. Students become capable technology users through individual software instruction in keyboarding via the *Type to Learn 3* program. In addition to word processing, students will create projects using *PowerPoint* and collect information through carefully supervised research online. Spreadsheet programs in math will introduce the students to recording and graphing data.

## **Health**

There are two health units during the fifth grade year. In the fall, students learn about communication. Peer pressure, conflict resolution, I-messages, and verbal/nonverbal language are some of the topics addressed. In the spring, tobacco and smoking are discussed. Both units of study incorporate role-playing, group discussion, and personal reflection.

## **Homework**

Homework requirements rise to 20 minutes a night per subject taught that day. In the latter half of the school year, beginning in January, homework is increased from four to five nights a week. In addition to the regular homework, fifth grade students are asked to complete eight book report projects once a month on pleasure reading selections from various genres.

## **Moral and Civic Habits**

Through a comprehensive rubric discussed in advisories, upper schoolers will address their roles in the community. The rubric covers following topics: the environment, courage to care, cyber citizenry, goal setting and reflection, service to others, responsibility and attitude and team work and collaboration.

## Sixth Grade

The curriculum for upper school students is designed to help them extend their ability to think critically, solve problems, apply previously learned skills, create an organized oral presentation and develop an understanding of the concepts appropriate to their maturation. Classroom routines encourage students to become independent learners, to assume responsibility for their individual learning, and to develop skills to be proactive in meeting new challenges. Students are supported in developing their own special relationship to their studies that comes from authentic learning experiences combined with individual strengths and interests. They learn to communicate their thinking effectively, and bring work to completion with attention to both depth and detail. Throughout the year the sixth grade engages in units to enhance their study skills, test-taking skills, time management and organization skills. Individualization of assignments in creative writing, research papers, mathematics, science projects, and artwork allows for differentiated instruction. The laptop program and the accompanying software will be integrated into all curricula during the sixth grade year with each of the sixth grade students having use of his or her own laptop. Students are expected to read one choice book a month within directed genre parameters. Sixth grade students take part in weekly advisory sessions, participate in the Student Council, and actively pursue community service projects.

It is important to help students during these early adolescent years to shape a positive self-image so that within the group context, they recognize each other's talents and accomplishments. Being responsible community members includes serving as a leader within the school. In order to establish expectations, build a positive group, and contribute to creating positive relationships among the students, the sixth grade participates in an overnight retreat during the second week of school with the fifth grade students and their teachers. A major goal of the retreat is to build trust and respect from student to student and from student to teacher as they participate in teambuilding games, small group skits, and develop and share goals. Weekly discussions during the sixth grade homeroom further promote classroom community. Students participate in whole group dialogue centered around our yearlong theme of partnership as well as weekly topics that encourage personal growth and social development. Through increased responsibility, students gain an awareness of their part in learning while working with their peers and teachers to further their own education.

### English

The English curriculum in sixth grade thematically dovetails with the sixth grade history curriculum. One of the main themes the students explore is that of power, investigating who holds power, how it is used or misused, and the possible avenues of speaking truth to power. Students are asked to be close and careful readers as well as thoughtful responders to the literature that they encounter during the course. They are encouraged to support their thinking with evidence from the text and are given varied opportunities to share their thoughts through their written responses and literature circle discussions. A direct link with the sixth grade history curriculum offers an opportunity for the students to write and perform a one-act play during the Medieval Banquet, a culminating event for their historical study of the Middle Ages.

Sixth graders' study of English focuses on the following elements:

*Reading Comprehension* – Through a variety of reading selections that include such titles as *King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table (Green version)*; *Where the Red Fern Grows*; *The Call of the Wild*; *Bridge to Terabithia*; and *The Pearl (Steinbeck)*, as well as different medieval legends and short stories, an emphasis is placed on strategies that allow students to think more deeply about the text by predicting, self-monitoring comprehension, acquiring new vocabulary, making connections, summarizing, inferring, as well as synthesizing, evaluating, and applying information. In addition, sixth graders explore various genres and literary elements such as setting, plot, character development, conflict, climax, resolution, theme, and point of view. Literary devices, including simile, metaphor, personification, and symbolism are also explored as a means to understanding the author's purpose and storytelling craft.

*Vocabulary Development* – Using the series *Wordly Wise*, students expand their vocabulary through weekly vocabulary units and corresponding tests. This series, which includes valuable online activities and study aides, is used in grades 5 through 8 and builds on students' prior knowledge of word study strategies to help them develop a strong vocabulary foundation.

*Writing* – Throughout the year, students explore the various genres of descriptive, narrative and expository writing. Modeled instruction, which emphasizes such elements as descriptive language, varied sentence structure, consistency of verb tenses, transition words and organization of thoughts, offers students the opportunity to recognize and strive for quality writing while still expressing their own voice. Assignments are structured according to the writing process: brainstorming, drafting, proofreading, revising, and completing a final copy. Students create several different essays that include narrative, summary, memoir, and persuasive writing. In addition, a poetry unit focuses on another distinct form of writing, as a means for understanding an author’s message, exploring figurative language, and providing a creative outlet for student expression. Grammar and punctuation are taught separately, as well as in conjunction with the writing process. Spelling is taught through a rules-based approach.

*Test Taking and Study Skills* – Through class work and consistent homework assignments, students review test-taking strategies to help prepare them for such standardized tests as the ERB. These skills focus on reading comprehension questions that test main idea, making inferences, author’s purpose, etc., as well as grammar, proofreading, and writing concepts.

*Technology* – Students use such software programs as *PowerPoint*, *Word*, and *Pages*. These technology tools help students learn, organize thoughts, study, express themselves, and present information.

*Presentation Skills* – Through book talks, literature circle discussions, written essays, and dramatic interpretation, students are given the opportunity to practice their oral communication skills. Voice projection, appropriate inflection, proper pacing, attentive listening, response to peers, and sharing of reflections help students grow as public speakers and active listeners.

## History

As a continuation of the Ancient history unit in fifth grade, this year we complete the two-year study of a thousand years of Western Civilization. The sixth grade year comprises an in-depth historical and cultural look at Medieval times, the Renaissance and the Age of Exploration. The group will explore a wide variety of texts, create timelines and a map of Europe, and write two research papers. A range of interdisciplinary activities include architectural and art projects (i.e. creating illuminated manuscripts, stained glass windows, scaled drawings of historical buildings and perspective drawing). Students will play period simulation games teaching about various topics such as feudalism and the Crusades. A culminating project, staging a medieval banquet, completes these studies. A year-end field trip during Upper School Trip Week is to New York City or Boston.

## Mathematics

*Holt Mathematics: Course 2* (Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 2007), the sixth grade math course will expand the students’ knowledge and comprehension of a wide variety of mathematical concepts.

Transitioning from a standards-based program to a skill-based textbook, the sixth grade year will begin with extensive practice on how to use a textbook. Each class session will explore new concepts through review of known information, introduction to new skills, guided practice, independent exploration, and review. Isolated skills will be linked to conceptual understanding throughout the year. A review of numbers and patterns, exponents, measurement, and the order of operations comprise the opening section of the course. Units in integers and rational numbers, patterns and functions, proportional relationships, and percents follow this first unit. Analyzing data and an introduction to geometry will take up the majority of the winter term. The year will be complete with a study of probability as well as a close look at inequalities and multi-step variable equations. Students will become skilled at graphing equations and functions, and they will be regularly challenged with meaningful problem solving situations using the skills and concepts presented in class.

## Science

The sixth grade science course will undertake a study of geology, earth sciences, and an introduction to physics. We begin the year with a focus on the local geology of the Taconic and Green Mountains of Vermont. Field trips are taken to observe the geological processes that formed our region of North America and its local topography. Using the two texts, *Changing Earth* and *Earth’s Surface*, the students will learn effective methods of gathering information, note taking, and outlining in order to supplement classroom work. The next area of focus includes motion, energy,

force, and friction. Students are introduced to everyday forces such as gravity and magnetism as well as work and power. They learn about speed, velocity, acceleration and momentum as well as Newton's three Laws of Motion. These concepts are introduced through the textbook, *Energy and Motion* (Harcourt). Students are challenged with hands-on laboratory experiments designed to emphasize mastery of the scientific method, specifically as it relates to the geological processes. Students then report findings in scientific format using computer spreadsheets with graphing capabilities to help analyze and understand the data as well as to visually present the collected data. Students are asked to continue to develop their scientific skills (introduced in grade 5) while also developing their writing structure, their ability to draw conclusions, and evaluate their experimentation strategies. In addition, students will continue to develop reading comprehension skills, note-taking skills, and research skills. Art Sixth graders use direct observation, personal experience, memory and traditional events as sources for art works. Students produce original pieces in two and three dimensions, using pencils, pastels, acrylics, and printmaking materials. Six graders use three dimensional material that include, clay, papier-mâché, wood, wire, found objects, and combinations of these media. In pottery and ceramic sculpture, students combine coil, pinch and slab methods and experiment with ways of decorating clay. Students strengthen their awareness of texture, color and design through fiber exercises such as weaving on simple looms, and soft sculpture. Students may develop three-dimensional works such as masks, animals, people or abstract forms. Students learn how to draw in one point perspective using a vanishing point and horizon line.

Students analyze their own work at all stages: in planning, in progress and upon completion. Sixth graders continue to evaluate personal work and the work of major artists, using photos, posters and when possible, original artwork, to describe intent, form conclusions and speculate on mood and theme. When sharing ideas with the group and the teacher, sixth graders practice attentiveness and respect for others' opinions.

## Music

In sixth grade, students will continue to sing canons, harmonies, and ostinati. An emphasis is placed on proper vocal technique, breathing, and correct vowel pronunciation. The study of songs will highlight lyrics and musical form. Students will learn about several major composers and one of each of their works.

Students will connect notation to sound using rhythmic and tonal syllables in both vocal and instrumental performance. They will continue to play recorder in class and compose, and perform as a bell choir in the Spring Concert.

Students will perform with the entire student body as well as in smaller groups. Concert etiquette as a performer and audience member will be emphasized. In addition to performing, students will attend live performances outside of school.

Sixth grade students are offered the opportunity to participate in Concert Band and Chorus as electives.

## French

The Upper School French Program is designed to give students the grammatical and vocabulary base, as well as the language learning habits, which they will need in order to be successful in secondary school French courses. The sixth grade program builds on the vocabulary and the grammar that students learned in the fifth grade. Students are gaining more facility with the Upper School French Program's structured grammatical and vocabulary study that they will need in order to flourish linguistically as they continue with French. The program focuses on building the four essential language modes of Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing.

The sixth grade will continue to work in the middle school French textbook *C'est à toi!* They will study the following: classroom and school vocabulary, the verb *avoir* (to have) and expressions that use *avoir*, conjugation of *-ir* verbs, the French calendar, school subjects, possessive pronouns, immediate and extended family terms, the verb *être* (to be), adjectives and adjective agreement, describing the weather, expanded clothing vocabulary, as well as the verb *faire* (to do) and expressions that use *faire*, the *futur proche* (immediate future) tense using the auxiliary verb *aller*, and the use of definite articles with the preposition *à* (to.)

Sixth grade students should expect to have homework for every French class (2-3 times/week) and a test or a quiz at least once a week. In-class and homework activities will include computer-based listening and repeating exercises;

speaking practice, partner information-gap speaking activities; creating, practicing and performing dialogues; and weekly reading and writing exercises. The students will be assessed through written quizzes and tests as well as their work on oral communication projects presented in class.

## **Technology**

Students in the sixth grade will begin participating in the Maple Street School Laptop initiative. Each student will use his or her individual laptop to word process (*Microsoft Word, Appleworks, Pages*), record scientific data (*ProScope*), create spreadsheets (*Microsoft Excel*), research from the World Wide Web and communicate by authoring multimedia presentations using *Keynote, Pages* or *PowerPoint*. Students in grade six will continue to practice keyboarding with installed software to improve their typing skills. While these laptops belong to Maple Street School until the student graduates, the students are encouraged to discover how best this tool can be used to assist their learning. Learning can be enhanced through proper use of computers by making organization, word editing, data sorting, and discovery easier and quicker while still demanding a student's individual and original thinking.

## **Physical Skills Development**

The sixth graders are involved with a program of vigorous physical activity through continued fitness work and fitness testing combined with fun cooperative activities and group initiatives. They will be exposed to a wide variety of team and individual sports, with an increased focus on application of skills to game-related situations. Working well with classmates and teammates is an essential requirement for successful completion of the sixth grade P.E. program. Finally, there will be regularly scheduled fun group games, which will take place between each sport skill unit.

## **Health**

The sixth grade health curriculum is delivered through a combination of biweekly lessons, as well as discussions and activities held in advisory groups and physical education classes. Students review issues of personal health and safety, handling emotions effectively, stress management, as well as the skills necessary for seeking the help of a trusted adult. Further study of proper nutrition, the effects of alcohol and smoking, and establishing effective habits of hygiene is an emphasis. Finally, students take a close look at the endocrine system as it relates to puberty and their changing bodies. The reproductive system is examined, and they receive an introduction to issues of human sexuality.

## **Homework**

Students receive 20-25 minutes of homework per subject per class meeting. The sixth grade schedule allows for two study sessions throughout the week. The labs allow for teacher-guided support and enrichment in math, English and science.

## **Moral and Civic Habits**

Through a comprehensive rubric discussed in advisories, upper schoolers will address their roles in the community. The rubric covers following topics: the environment, courage to care, cyber citizenry, goal setting and reflection, service to others, responsibility and attitude and team work and collaboration.

## Seventh Grade

The curriculum for the seventh grade students is designed as an intellectual bridge between concrete concepts and abstract thinking. Students are expected to develop their critical thinking abilities in all areas; from analysis of prime sources in history and their hypotheses in science to problem solving in art. Thematic analysis comes into focus in the study of literature. Mixed grade level classroom activities, school and community service projects, participation in athletics, and independent projects are planned to build the self-understanding, self-esteem, and self-reliance of each child. The seventh grade student is expected to become an independent thinker, planner and overall learner, and the tools for succeeding are provided throughout the curriculum. The students, now in their second year of the laptop technology program, continue to become sophisticated, intelligent and ethical users of the latest technology. The integration of the laptop program into all aspects of the curriculum will also enable the students to accelerate their research skills and problem-solving abilities, as well as their skills in presenting independent projects in a group setting.

The seventh grade year offers a continuation of the group building process as well as opportunities for the development of leadership skills. The students learn to share and appreciate each others' accomplishments and talents, while developing their own strong self-concept.

### World Literature

One focus of the literature for the seventh grade is global, complementing the seventh grade geography course. During the year, students are engaged as close and careful readers of a diverse set of novels, short stories and poems from both Western and non-Western authors. They are also expected to verbalize their thoughts and ideas about what they read both in writing and in class discussions.

Seventh graders' study of world literature focuses on the following elements:

*Reading Comprehension* – Through a variety of reading selections that are drawn from such titles as *Day of the Pelican* (Paterson); *Dragonwings* (Yep); *Where the Red Fern Grows* (Rawls); *The Outsiders* (Hinton) and one Shakespeare play; as well as a selection of short stories and poetry from around the world, an emphasis is placed on strategies that allow students to think more deeply about the text. The themes of prejudice, stereotyping, discrimination, power, and justice, as well as commonalities among all people are explored, offering students the opportunity to delve into their own thinking about the world. Literary devices, including simile, metaphor, personification, allusion, symbolism, and irony are also explored as a means to understanding the author's purpose and storytelling craft. Finally, the seventh grade, in concert with the eighth grade, will study a Shakespeare play in its full length and mount a production based upon an abridged script.

*Vocabulary Development* – Using the series *Wordly Wise*, students expand their vocabulary through weekly vocabulary units and corresponding tests. This series, which includes valuable online activities and study aides, is used in grades 5 through 8 and builds on students' prior knowledge of word study strategies to help them develop a strong vocabulary foundation.

*Writing* – Throughout the year, students explore the various genres of descriptive, narrative and expository writing. Modeled instruction, which emphasizes such elements as descriptive language, varied sentence structure, consistency of verb tenses, transition words and organization of thoughts, offers students the opportunity to recognize and strive for quality writing, while still expressing their own voice. Assignments are structured according to the writing process: brainstorming, drafting, proofreading, revising, and completing a final copy. Students create several different essays that include narrative, summary, character analysis, memoir, and persuasive writing. In addition, a poetry unit focuses on another distinct form of writing, as a means for understanding an author's message, exploring figurative language, and providing a creative outlet for student expression. Grammar and punctuation are taught separately, as well as in conjunction with the writing process. Spelling is taught through a rules-based approach.

*Test Taking and Study Skills* – Through class work and consistent homework assignments, students review test-taking strategies to help prepare them for such standardized tests as the ERB and SSAT. These skills focus on reading comprehension questions that test main idea, making inferences, author's purpose, etc., as well as grammar, proofreading, and writing concepts.

*Technology* – Students use such software programs as *Word and iMovie*. These technology tools help students learn, organize thoughts, study, express themselves, and present information.

*Presentation Skills* – Through book talks, literature circle discussions, written essays, research projects, and dramatic interpretation, students are given the opportunity to practice their oral communication skills. Voice projection, appropriate inflection, proper pacing, attentive listening, response to peers, and sharing of reflections help students grow as public speakers and active listeners.

## **Mathematics**

Using the *Holt Mathematics: Course 3* (Holt, Rinehart and Winston 2007), the seventh grade class deepens their understanding of the math concepts explored. Building on the content presented in *Holt Mathematics: Course 2*, the students strengthen their level of mastery through presentation of new skills and concepts, guided practice, and independent exploration. The year begins with a review of expressions and integers as well as equations and inequalities. Content units explored throughout the year include rational numbers, graphs, functions and sequences, exponents and roots, ratios, proportions, and similarity, percents, geometry, perimeter, area and volume, data and statistics, probability, multi-step equations and inequalities, graphing lines, sequences and functions, and polynomials. The students will be regularly challenged with meaningful problem solving situations using the skills and concepts presented in class.

Seventh grade students demonstrating a strong understanding of math and an ability to think abstractly will take Pre-Algebra during their seventh grade year. Course content will be explored through whole class and small group work sessions. Students will begin the year exploring integers, equations, and inequalities. The year unfolds to rational numbers and proportions, functions, geometry, and measurement, and concludes with data analysis, polynomials, and transformation. The skills and concepts presented through *Pre-Algebra* (McDougal Littell, 2008) will be supported through meaningful problem solving situations.

## **Global Geography**

Students will learn about world geography, studying world culture areas of South America, Africa, Australia, Southeast/west Asia, China, Japan, India, and the Middle East. Students will develop skills such as statistical analysis, critical writing and research. Specifically, they will become facile with GNP, GDP per capita, birth rate, fertility rates, literacy rates and other important data. The focus will be on developing an understanding of the rate and problems of population growth, the unequal distribution of raw materials and, hence, opportunities to participate in the industrial world, international trade and technology, and the impact of climate and geography on a country's development. In addition students learn about different cultures to appreciate the richness of the human response to living in communities with exposure to art, literature, drama, music and belief systems.

## **Science**

The seventh grade science course focuses on an introduction to biology, cells, health and environmental studies. Students will develop an understanding of cells and hereditary through the study of cell structure and function, genetics, and cell processes. They will learn how living things change, and how cells interact in our own bodies in a unit on human biology. Then, with this foundation, they will further their understanding of how the local environment also affects cell health and processes. The unit on Environmental Science explores the out of doors around Maple Street School, and uses data, such as from our solar panels and samples from Munson Brook, to analyze the effect of the environment and environmental changes on local species. The seventh grade leads the school's participation in the Green Cup Challenge (a competitive environmental contest nation wide.) Problem solving plays a key role in these studies. The application of mathematical and algebraic algorithms brings the math curriculum to real life in science. With both studies, hands on experimentation, laboratory reports and presentations become an integral part of science learning.

## **Art**

Seventh graders derive source material for art works from memory, imagination, self-perception, and observation of the world. Sketchbooks are a valuable resource to keep these ideas and observations and for planning future works.

Students use concise vocabulary to compare the use of elements and principles in their own works and in the works of others. Seventh graders use imaginative combinations of materials to produce art works in two and three dimensions. Students do more planning than in earlier grades, demonstrating more sophistication with two and three-dimensional materials.

Students explore the concept of Pop Art as they look at examples to inspire their own work. Drawings of the face using the grid method will focus on shading, texture and contrast with the pencil. They will participate in class critiques and continue to develop the language of art.

## Music

In seventh grade, students will continue to sing canons, harmonies, and ostinati. An emphasis is placed on proper vocal technique, breathing, and correct vowel pronunciation. The study of songs will highlight lyrics and musical form. Students will learn about several major composers and one of each of their works.

Students will connect notation to sound using rhythmic and tonal syllables in both vocal and instrumental performance. They will continue to perform as a bell choir and compose using Sibelius computer software.

Students will perform with the entire student body as well as in smaller groups. Concert etiquette as a performer and audience member will be emphasized. In addition to performing, students will attend live performances outside of school.

Seventh grade students are offered the opportunity to participate in Concert Band and Chorus as electives. Students may also submit a composition and receive coaching from a professional composer through the Vermont Midi Project's Opus Competition.

## French

The Upper School French Program is designed to give students the grammatical and vocabulary base, as well as the language learning habits, which they will need in order to be successful in secondary school French courses.

Students learn the skills for the program's structured grammatical and vocabulary study, skills necessary in order to flourish linguistically as they continue with French. The seventh and eighth grade program is a challenging language course of the type that students will encounter in high school. The program focuses on building the four essential language modes of Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing.

The seventh grade program is equivalent to the first half of a secondary school French I course. Students will be working with *D'accord*, a rigorous secondary school textbook that incorporates video and online language activities of the type students are likely to encounter as they continue with language study in high school and college. Whether they choose to go on to local schools or to competitive boarding schools, students should find that *D'accord* is excellent preparation for what they will be expected to accomplish in further French study.

During the 2011-2012 academic year, students will work with the following: greetings, vocabulary for classes and school objects, numbers, the expression *il y a* (there is,) regular and irregular adjectives and agreement, the verb *être* (to be,) common *-er* verbs, forming questions and expressing negation, the verb *avoir* (to have,) expressions of time, and diacritical marks or accents.

The course is a fast-paced one. Seventh grade students should expect to have homework for every French class (2-3 times/week) that involves a combination of computer-based listening and speaking activities, as well as reading and writing activities. Students should also expect to have a test or a quiz at least once a week or more frequently; in many weeks they will have daily quizzes. During each unit studied, in addition to the unit exam, the students will be assessed through their work on an oral communication project presented in class. It is very important that students stay current with the assignments, and take the responsibility of asking for help whenever they need to.

## Technology

Seventh graders are experienced in the use of technology. Their laptops are seamlessly integrated into their studies. Word processing software (*Microsoft Word*, *Pages*, and *Inspiration*) allows them to order their thoughts as they develop extended pieces of writing supporting opinions and explicating main ideas. The easy use of dictionaries and

thesaurus stimulates good word choice. The geography course requires on line research; students collect and learn to interpret current demographic and economic data. Students access current events from around the globe. In science the use of *Microsoft Excel* spread sheets makes the testing of hypotheses in science labs (using *ProScope*) immediate and meaningful. Students also use their laptops to present material to classmates whether it is research on a country or an interpretation of literature.

### **Physical Fitness and Sports**

The program for the seventh grade includes a heavy emphasis on improvement of the students' personal fitness levels. Fitness testing in the areas of cardiovascular, strength, flexibility, speed and agility will take place at the beginning and the end of the year. We will work on instilling the value of a healthy lifestyle that includes regular exercise. Group challenges, initiatives and trust activities will be a regular part of our lessons, with a goal of improved class cooperation and cohesiveness. Within the realm of athletics, the seventh graders will continue to expand on their skills. Lessons will include a greater frequency of game-related opportunities to display skills, and the continued development of positive behavior and good sportsmanship during our activities is an expected outcome.

### **Heath Education**

The seventh grade health curriculum is devoted to education on substance abuse, nutrition, and maintaining a positive self-image. Using the *Project Alert* program, students receive the latest information on the harmful effects of drugs and alcohol as well as refusal skills training. Students are also encouraged to take part in the *Refuse to Use* program, which is sponsored by The Collaborative, a local non-profit organization dedicated to providing healthy opportunities for teenagers. A more specific study of sex education takes place, along with an extended lesson from a medical professional with experience in working with children on these issues. The challenge of decision-making as middle school students is an ongoing focus. Weekly discussion and activities in our advising groups often surrounds the issues of empathy, internet safety, ethics, and etiquette, and establishing healthy, productive relationships.

### **Homework**

Students can expect to have approximately 30 minutes per subject of homework five nights a week. In addition students generally have study time each. Students are expected to take responsibility for completing assignments missed while absent.

### **Moral and Civic Habits**

Through a comprehensive rubric discussed in advisories, upper-schoolers will address their roles in the community. The rubric covers following topics: the environment, courage to care, cyber citizenry, goal setting and reflection, service to others, responsibility and attitude and team work and collaboration.

## Eighth Grade

As the oldest Maple Street School students, eighth graders are expected to engage themselves as responsible leaders in the school community and, as such, are held in high esteem by their younger peers. The eighth grade year offers students a chance to participate in meaningful leadership opportunities in a variety of ways including, but not limited to: editing the school yearbook; coordinating community service projects; tutoring younger students; coordinating activities for younger children at parent association events; partnering with advisors to provide guidance in advisories; organizing student council activities as well as mentoring and modeling responsible behavior for younger students. The expectation for eighth graders is that they are fully involved in pursuing their interests and taking responsibility for their academic and social goals. In addition, the Maple Street School curriculum encourages eighth graders to become abstract thinkers, critical readers and problem solvers as well as thoughtful and self-aware citizens in their society.

### English

The eighth grade English curriculum broadens students' experience, further cultivating their appreciation of literature while asking them to seriously analyze, discuss, and write about what they read. For the most part, the English curriculum supports the students' study of American history in an examination of the American narrative, but there are a few instances where divergence from this focus occurs. Through the study of various literary genres, including a project-based unit on American folk songs, students are asked to make thematic connections and to determine how those themes reinforce or undermine their understanding of American culture. Students learn to organize and clarify both their oral and verbal expression, linking their thematic discoveries to their existing knowledge.

Eighth graders' study of literature focuses on the following elements:

*Reading Comprehension* – An emphasis is placed on strategies that allow students to think more deeply about the text. The themes of freedom, change, prejudice, discrimination, power, justice, and the American Dream, offer students the opportunity to delve into their own thinking about the world. Literature is chosen from the following: *To Kill A Mockingbird* (Lee); *Out of the Dust* (Hesse); *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (Twain); *The Outsiders* (Hinton); poetry by a variety of American poets including Frost, Dickinson, and Emerson; and several American short stories. The eighth grade curriculum also includes the study of *The Diary of a Young Girl* (Frank) as it connects with our history study of democracy and the effects of a totalitarian regime on the local and global society. Finally, the eighth grade, in concert with the seventh grade, will study a Shakespeare play in its full length and mount a production based upon an abridged script.

*Vocabulary Development* – Using the series *Wordly Wise*, students expand their vocabulary through weekly units and corresponding tests. This series, which includes valuable online activities and study aides, is used in grades 5 through 8 and builds on students' prior knowledge of word study strategies to help them develop a strong vocabulary foundation.

*Writing* – Throughout the year, students explore the various genres of descriptive, narrative and expository writing. Modeled instruction, which emphasizes such elements as descriptive language, varied sentence structure, consistency of verb tenses, transition words and organization of thoughts, offers students the opportunity to recognize and strive for quality writing while still finding their own voice. Literary devices, including simile, metaphor, personification, allusion, symbolism, allegory, and irony are also explored as a means to understanding the author's purpose and storytelling craft. Assignments are structured according to the writing process: brainstorming, drafting, proofreading, revising, and completing a final copy. Students create several different essays that include narrative, summary, character analysis, memoir, and persuasive writing. In addition, a poetry unit focuses on another distinct form of writing, as a means for understanding an author's message, exploring figurative language, and providing a creative outlet for student expression. Grammar and punctuation are taught separately, as well as in conjunction with the writing process.

*Test Taking and Study Skills* – Through class work and consistent homework assignments, students review test-taking strategies to help prepare them for such standardized tests as the ERB and SSAT. These skills focus on reading comprehension questions that test main idea, making inferences, author's purpose, etc., as well as grammar,

proofreading, and writing concepts.

*Technology* – Students use such software programs as *Word*, *Garage Band*, and *iMovie*. These technology tools help students learn, organize thoughts, study, express themselves, and present information.

*Presentation Skills* – Through book talks, literature circle discussions, written essays, and dramatic interpretation, students are given the opportunity to practice their oral communication skills. Voice projection, appropriate inflection, dramatic interpretation, proper pacing, attentive listening, response to peers, and sharing of reflections help students grow as public speakers, creative participants, and active listeners.

## American History

This course examines the history of the United States from the pre-colonial era through modern day, with a particular emphasis on the evolving definitions of liberty and justice. The curriculum relies heavily on primary source materials, encouraging students to explore the nation's history through the voices of its people. To support the document-based focus of the course, United States History utilizes a thematic approach that calls for meaningful critical analysis, interpretative thinking and inclusive class discussion. United States History is a writing-intensive course where students develop their skills through a variety of assignments including quizzes, in-class essays, document based questions, a research project and projects. Students will also participate in debates, oral presentations and group projects.

### Core Questions:

What does history teach us and how can we use the lessons to inform our actions as a nation?

What are our rights and privileges as Americans, and how did we earn them?

How should we continue to pursue justice and liberty, honoring our history while making room for diversity at the same time?

Whose history should be considered “American” history?

## Mathematics

*Pre-Algebra* (McDougal Littell, 2008) provides the outline for eighth grade mathematics. Students will begin the year exploring integers, equations, and inequalities. The year unfolds to rational numbers and proportions, functions, geometry, and measurement, and concludes with data analysis, polynomials, and transformation. Course content will be explored through whole class dialogue, small group work sessions, and independent exploration. The course will be strengthened through practical application of skills and concepts within meaningful problem solving situations.

Eighth grade students demonstrating a strong understanding of math and an ability to think abstractly will take Algebra 1 during their eighth grade year. Course content will be explored through whole class and small group work sessions. Students will begin the year engaging in the language of algebra while reviewing the order of operations and simplifying expressions with an introduction to functions. The year unfolds to equations, inequalities, functions, exponents, polynomials, quadratic functions and equations, data analysis and probability, and radical and rational functions. The skills and concepts presented through *Holt Mathematics: Algebra 1* (Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 2007) will be supported through meaningful problem solving situations.

Eighth grade students that have successfully completed an Algebra 1 course will be offered Geometry. *Holt Mathematics: Geometry* (Holt, Rinehart and Winston 2011) will provide the outline for the yearlong course allowing students to explore foundations for geometry, geometric reasoning, parallel and perpendicular lines, triangle congruence, properties and attributes of triangles, polygons and quadrilaterals, similarity, right triangles and trigonometry, extending perimeter, circumference, and area, spatial reasoning, circles, and extending transformational geometry. Building upon their current level of understanding, students will broaden and deepen their geometrical content knowledge through whole group exploration, guided practice, and independent study.

The students will be regularly challenged with meaningful problem solving situations using the skills and concepts presented in class.

## Science

Science students in the eighth grade are introduced chemistry through sophisticated lessons on chemical interactions, chemical building blocks, and the earth's water. Experiments are designed to enhance and reinforce the text readings on atomic structure, molecules, bonding, and the Periodic Table. We ask our 8<sup>th</sup> graders to demonstrate proficiency in all lab procedures and proper use of equipment and chemicals, and we continue to reinforce scientific inquiry including questioning and predicting, observing and measuring, collecting and recording data, and drawing conclusions. In addition, students will continue to develop reading comprehension skills, note-taking skills, research skills, and writing skills so they can best showcase their scientific knowledge.

## Art

Eighth grade students keep a sketchbook as a resource for ideas and are encouraged to use experiences from their own lives as inspiration for their work. Students explore new possibilities and combinations of the elements of art: such as color, line and form. In addition to working on the potter's wheel, students will create their own cup and saucer with clay. Contrast, balance and unity will be explored as students create two and three-dimensional work in a variety of media including paper, wood, cardboard and wire. Students are encouraged to offer ideas and suggestions during class critiques and informally. Students focus on the figure as they draw using classmates as models. They observe and discuss the figure in works of art for comparison and style. Students create small sculptural figures using plaster. They study styles of artwork by a variety of artists. Classroom projects may connect with local art exhibits when appropriate.

## Music

In eighth grade, students will continue to sing canons, harmonies, and ostinati. An emphasis is placed on proper vocal technique, breathing, and correct vowel pronunciation. The study of songs will highlight lyrics and musical form. Students will learn about several major composers and one of each of their works.

Students will connect notation to sound using rhythmic and tonal syllables in both vocal and instrumental performance. They will continue to perform as a bell choir, adding the component of harmony to accompany the melody. Students will compose using Sibelius computer software.

Students will perform with the entire student body as well as in smaller groups. Concert etiquette as a performer and audience member will be emphasized. In addition to performing, students will attend live performances outside of school.

Eighth grade students are offered the opportunity to participate in Concert Band and Chorus as electives. Students may also submit a composition and receive coaching from a professional composer through the Vermont Midi Project's Opus Competition.

## French

The Upper School French Program is designed to give students the grammatical and vocabulary base, as well as the language learning habits, which they will need in order to be successful in secondary school French courses. Students learn the skills for the program's structured grammatical and vocabulary study, skills necessary in order to flourish linguistically as they continue with French. The seventh and eighth grade program is a challenging language course of the type that students will encounter in high school. The program focuses on building the four essential language modes of Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing.

The eighth grade program is equivalent to the second half of a secondary school French I course. New this year, students will be working with *D'accord*, a rigorous secondary school textbook that incorporates video and online language activities of the type students are likely to encounter as they continue with language study in high school and college. Whether they choose to go on to local schools or to competitive boarding schools, students should find that *D'accord* is excellent preparation for what they will be expected to accomplish in further French study.

During the 2011-2012 academic year, students will work with the following: vocabulary for classes and school activities, numbers to 100 and greater, the expression *il y a* (there is,) the verb *avoir* (to have,) family vocabulary and

possessive adjectives, expressions of time, prepositions of location, locations in a French town, contractions with the preposition *à*, interrogative words and question formation, regular *-ir* verbs, the verbs *prendre* (to take) and *boire* (to drink,) the partitive articles, using the verb *faire* (to do) with leisure activities and with weather, disjunctive pronouns, irregular *-ir* verbs, the calendar, and spelling-change *-er* verbs.

The course is a fast-paced one. Eighth grade students should expect to have homework for every French class (2-3 times/week) that involves a combination of computer-based listening and speaking activities, as well as reading and writing activities. Students should also expect to have a test or a quiz at least once a week or more frequently; in many weeks they will have daily quizzes. It is very important that students stay current with the assignments, and take the responsibility of asking for help whenever they need to. During each unit studied, in addition to the unit exam, the students will be assessed through their work on an oral communication project presented in class.

## **Technology**

Students in grade eight will continue to use their laptops on a daily basis. They will master keyboarding skills and learn formatting commands. Using *Keynote*, *Pages*, and *PowerPoint*, students will make appropriate presentations to authentic audiences. Students will also use *ProScope* and *Excel* spreadsheets to record and analyze data and use graphs and charts to communicate ideas in all subjects. Finally, students will learn to research across the curriculum, searching for periodical literature in other libraries and using Internet sources for current events and demographic data. The students will use their computers to problem solve using analysis, synthesis and evaluation.

## **Physical Fitness and Sports**

The program for the eighth grade includes a heavy emphasis on improvement of the students' personal fitness levels. Fitness testing in the areas of cardiovascular, strength, flexibility, speed and agility will take place at the beginning and the end of the year. We will work on instilling the value of a healthy lifestyle that includes regular exercise. Group challenges, initiatives and trust activities will be a regular part of our lessons, with a goal of improved class cooperation and cohesiveness. Within the realm of athletics, the eighth graders will continue to expand on their skills. Lessons will include a greater frequency of game-related opportunities to display skills, and the continued development of positive behavior and good sportsmanship during our activities is an expected outcome.

## **Health**

The eighth grade health curriculum is devoted to education on substance abuse, nutrition, and maintaining a positive self-image. Using the *Project Alert* program, students receive the latest information on the harmful effects of drugs and alcohol as well as refusal skills training. Students are also encouraged to take part in the *Refuse to Use* program, which is sponsored by The Collaborative, a local non-profit organization dedicated to providing healthy opportunities for teenagers. A more specific study of sex education takes place, along with an extended lesson with a medical professional with experience in working with children on these issues. The challenge of decision-making as middle school students is an ongoing focus. Weekly discussion and activities in our advising groups often surrounds the issues of empathy, internet safety, ethics, and etiquette, and establishing healthy, productive relationships.

## **Homework**

Students can expect to have approximately 30 minutes per subject of homework five nights a week. Additionally students study time each. They are encouraged to work on the most difficult assignments during these study halls. Students are expected to take responsibility for receiving and completing assignments missed while absent.

## **Moral and Civic Habits**

Through a comprehensive rubric discussed in advisories, upper schoolers will address their roles in the community. The rubric covers the environment, courage to care, cyber citizenry, goal setting and reflection, service to others, responsibility and attitude, as well as, team work and collaboration.

## Physical Education Department Philosophy

Maple Street School has designed our physical education program around the following tenets. We believe that...

- a physically educated person is one who ...
  - has necessary movement skills
  - is physically fit
  - participates regularly in physical activity
  - knows the implications and benefits of exercise
  - values physical activity and its contributions to a healthy lifestyle
- the physical education program is primarily responsible for teaching our students the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviors necessary to establish habits of physical activity for successful living
- every child can develop appropriate skills, feel good about his/her body, and relate to others in a positive way
- physical education is an integral part of the education of the whole child
- every student's life can be enhanced through participation in a comprehensive, sequential physical education program which promotes physical, mental, emotional, and social well-being
- a student's academic achievement is enhanced through physical activity
- normal competition is inherent in our society, and students benefit from exposure to a properly designed program of athletics which includes competitive activities
- participation in athletics supports the development of sportsmanship, commitment, respect, cooperation, leadership and interdependence, which are desired qualities necessary for lifelong success

## September Retreats

During the first two weeks of school, the upper-school teachers designed retreats for the seventh and eighth graders and the fifth and sixth graders. We have found that excellence increases when students understand both the academic and personal expectations of the school especially when students transition to a higher level of academia. Teachers lead discussions on what the new academic expectations are for the year, and explain how individual students will be able to meet and surpass the standards. The teachers also address the meaningful leadership opportunities in the upper school and what it means to be a leader and role model. In addition, the group on the retreat is challenged to take on some sort of project for the group. Finally, retreats are time set aside for goal setting and journaling. We have found that when students reflect on what they want out of their school year, they become more invested in their education. Students are given a number of journal prompts and time to write after moments of reflection in the woods. Goal setting is one of those life-long skills we try to instill, and a meaningful way to begin the school year. Of course there is social time and bonding too. But these retreats create a meaningful foundation that allows students to be invested in their learning process – an investment that may not happen without this special time to really focus in on why they are here and what do they want to get out of the year.

## Educational Trips

Educational trips are an integral component of Maple Street School's program as we believe students should experience learning not just in the classroom, but beyond the school walls and especially in places that help to broaden and authenticate a student's understanding of the world. Overnight trips are a special privilege of older students as we seek to integrate multiple aspects of a child's classroom studies. The sixth grade has taken trips to New York City and Boston to see exhibits on medieval and Renaissance art and architecture. The seventh grade has traditionally ventured to Quebec to test their language skills in an authentic atmosphere while also studying the beginnings of centennial history, and Canadian culture. The eighth grade travels each spring to Washington, D.C. as the culminating experience of their study of American History. These trips enrich and broaden knowledge, bringing to life concepts studied from readings and class discussion.







