MIDDLE SCHOOL
CURRICULUM 2008-2009

6th Grade Course Curriculum

Art, Music, and Theater 6: This course introduces students to the fine arts. **Art** teaches the student to express herself creatively, to see and appreciate her environment, and to use a basic art vocabulary. **Theater** is a basic introductory course, which allows students to participate creatively in drama activities. **Music** gives students the opportunity to enjoy singing and performing together.

Technology 6: Students will practice keyboarding and learn the basics of computer troubleshooting. Emphasis will be placed on computer etiquette and safety. This course will teach students to organize ideas, concepts and information using documents, spreadsheets, charts, and presentations made with Microsoft's Word, Excel, and PowerPoint. Creative expression will be encouraged as student finish up with multimedia and web projects using audio, video, and imaging equipment and software.

English and Social Studies Integrated: This integrated English and Social Studies course meets all year long, providing our youngest with a transition to our school and block schedule. In English, this is a "level the playing field" year, where basic principles of reading, writing, grammar, and vocabulary are reviewed or introduced. We review basic parts of speech and sentence structure. We focus on writing as a process that involves pre-writing exercises and basic paragraph and essay structure: topic and transition sentences, introduction, body, conclusion, and finally, proofreading and revision. We alternate creative writing with expository.

In Social Studies, we begin with the study of early man and finish with pre-contact civilizations in the Americas and a unit on the American Constitution. Skills such as map reading, graphing, reading timelines and comparing and contrasting cultures are also introduced. Integration with English allows for reading and writing across the curriculum. Not only do our literature selections focus on the cultures we will study, each social studies unit in the text contains a literary passage relating to those cultures.

Sixth graders enjoy many projects and adventures! We will spend the night at the Bishop Museum when we finish our first novel; dress as Egyptians for the social pyramid presentation and enjoy Egyptian food; share survivor stories by a campfire; and research and portray colonial women, to name just a few!

Foreign Language 6: The sixth grade foreign language unit is an exploration of culture and basic conversation in four languages; Chinese, French, Japanese, and Spanish, from which the students will choose to study in the seventh grade. "The fun with fundamentals" approach gives them an enthusiastic preview of their future language learning opportunities.

Integrated Science 6: Sixth graders' curiosity will be ignited when they don goggles to delve into the fascinating world of the human body and health. Using the scientific method, tomorrow's future scientists will also test their knowledge and laboratory skills to gain a better understanding of hurricanes, tornadoes and other weather phenomena.

We will culminate the year with "Project Citizen," in which the class will choose a community problem and learn the methods and procedures used in our political process. The goal of the program is to develop student's commitment to active citizenship.

Math 6: Students in the sixth grade begin the next step towards higher mathematics. This course ensures skills and concepts of elementary mathematics are mastered. Students develop mathematical thinking and reasoning through engaging problems while practicing and maintaining skills in daily exercises individually and in groups. Major focus areas are number theory, concepts and computation with fractions and decimals, percent concepts, two-dimensional geometry, and data collection and display. Number sense, estimation and communication of knowledge are practiced throughout the course.

Skills Seminar: Skills Seminar is a class that will help ease the transition of our newest members to La Pietra. Besides lots of question & answer time and covering daily events, the girls will learn other coping skills to help make the transition from Elementary school to Middle School as smooth as possible.

Physical Education: The emphasis of 6th grade PE is to introduce and experience a variety of traditional and non-traditional team and individual sports. Students participate and perform in a variety of activities, skills, and lead-up games in various environments. Students are measured on seven components of physical fitness: Cardiovascular and muscular endurance, speed, agility, power, strength, and flexibility, to set personal goals and focus on the activities that develop weak areas and maintain areas of strength.

After School Sports: To prepare for the ILH athletic options offered in 7th grade, our 6th graders are encouraged to participate and perform in preseason conditioning, weight training, water skills/games, competitive league volleyball, and basketball offered after school and during summer break.

7th and 8th Grade Course Curriculum

Art, Music, and Theater:

This 7th and 8th grade program is divided into terms of art, theater, and music each year. The art portion is an introduction to the basic art media and skills. The course teaches the student to express herself creatively, to see and appreciate her environment, and to use a basic art vocabulary.

Students in 7th and 8th grade music class study basic music theory, including note and rest values and dynamics. They learn to differentiate the various periods of music and become acquainted with the lives of important composers and instruments of the orchestra. They actively participate in learning how to sing and perform in a choral setting. They study the history of the Star Spangled Banner and learn all verses. They learn to appreciate excellence in writing for the musical theatre, attending concerts or musical productions and critiquing them.

Additionally, the 8th grade students are taught the history of 20th Century American Popular Music and the history of the Broadway Musical.

The theater portion teaches students improvisation, body movement, mime, other theater techniques.

Technology 7:

Students will advance word processing presentation skills while being introduced to spreadsheet concepts. To enhance the creative possibilities, students will use graphic design and photo editing software.

Technology 8:

Students will learn to communicate through technology. Emphasis will be placed on graphic design, presentation, data analysis, and video editing. These skills will culminate in a science project based on knowledge gleaned from a trip to the Big Island of Hawaii and Kilauea.

English 7:

Learning about the world and its stories provides a fascinating, vicarious glimpse into the different people and cultures that make living in Hawaii so special. Writing poetry, stories, plays, and essays are ways we share our unique voices with our classmates. Along the way, we explore vocabulary and language skills. The highlight of our studies is project work, an activity that often includes group learning as well as presentation!

English 8:

Why is the world still reading the diary of a thirteen-year old girl? Why is Anne Frank a symbol of hope and inspiration? We will answer these questions before we move back through the centuries to play the roles in the tragic love story of Juliet and her Romeo. We will examine the consequences of love, and those of hate. Delve into novels, short stories, poetry, and plays, and in the process, uncover the secret of what makes a great writer. Continue to develop your foundation in grammar and vocabulary. Begin to explore and apply critical thinking skills to the books we are reading in class and your outside reading. Come with us and explore the mystical world of thesis writing and learn how to write both analytically and creatively.

Chinese, French, Japanese, Spanish IA/IB:

The course content and objectives of a first year foreign language course are spread over two years of learning, allowing consideration for the age of the students and their background in their own language. Emphasis is placed on conversation and imagination, creative, and even playful use of the language. Skits are performed, songs are sung, and educational games are played using newly acquired knowledge.

Integrated Science 7:

Students in this course will investigate animal characteristics, the Earth and its moon, the concept of matter, and the Earth's waters. They will learn to work in a realistic laboratory setting through regular investigations. Students will practice finding measurements such as the mass, volume, and density of objects. They will learn how to graph data and interpret their results in order to draw conclusions.

A unit on animals will familiarize students with the simplest of animals to the most complex. Students will learn about the adaptations animals have to obtain food and escape predators. They will learn how animals obtain oxygen, circulate blood, and reproduce in addition to other interesting facts. A unit on astronomy encourages students to learn about the Solar System. Finally, units on water and chemistry will address topics such as the basics of atomic structure, chemical and physical changes of matter, and the water cycle.

Integrated Science 8:

Students investigate basic life processes and characteristics of living things. They examine the processes of diffusion and osmosis, and apply their knowledge to more complex, natural systems. They determine how cells create fuel for energy and growth through photosynthesis. They will also study the Periodic Table of Elements in more detail and learn about basic Mendellian genetics.

A unit study of basic Hawaiian geology investigates volcanic processes common on Hawaiian Islands, particularly on Kilauea volcano, active since 1983. This unit culminates in a two-day trip to the Big Island of Hawaii for the Kilauea Volcano Field Lab. The students construct a multimedia project that will integrate their experiences from the trip with their computer course.

Intermediate Skills Review (Grade 7):

This one-term course offers a rigorous study of arithmetic operations with decimals and fractions, emphasizing number sense and estimation as well as facility of computation. Other topics include percents, ratio and proportions, and geometry. Applications of computation and problem-solving skills are emphasized throughout the course. Methodology consists of discussion, group projects, collaborative learning and computer activities.

Placement is based on results of placement testing and/or department recommendation. This course is followed in the same year by Mathematics 7.

Math 7:

Grade 7 is a critical year for developing mathematical skills and habits that students will use their entire lives. The course focuses on learning mathematics in the context of real-life situations. Students will practice using estimation and learn to trust common sense to help them solve math problems. Students will work often in pairs and groups, and will develop facility in reading, writing, and speaking about math. Topics covered include creating and interpreting graphs and tables, using variables, proportional reasoning, working with integers, and two- and three-dimensional measurement. Math 7 serves as a gateway to either Math 8 (Pre-algebra) or Algebra I.

Math 8:

This course is designed to help students strengthen their arithmetic skills (whole numbers, decimals, fractions, and integers) and integrate them with a study of variables algebraic expressions and multiple-step equation solving. Problem solving is emphasized throughout the course, using formulas, equations, models, diagrams, and projects. Students are encouraged to verbalize their understanding through class discussion, writing assignments, and group work. Geometry, probability and statistics are presented as extensions of the algebra skills learned.

Course placement is based on results of placement testing and/or department recommendation.

Algebra I: This is the first course in our high school sequence of college preparatory courses. It is a rigorous study of algebraic topics including linear and quadratic equations, polynomials, systems of equations, inequalities, and rational and irrational numbers. In addition students will learn graphing skills and the relation between algebraic functions and their graphs. Extensive problem solving is integrated throughout the course. There are opportunities for writing about math, working in groups, and participating in discussions. All students entering this course must have a strong command of numeric skills, including fractions, decimals, and positive and negative numbers and experience with the use of variables.

Course placement is based on results of placement testing and/or department recommendation.

Middle School PE/Health:

The goal of middle school P.E. is to have the girls experience a variety of individual and team sports, understand the rules and strategies, and demonstrate good sportsmanship relative to each activity.

Having participated in many sports may encourage them to choose outside of class activities/sports they are interested in pursuing further, as well as become educated spectators. We hope the range of experience will help them find sports that are best suited to their liking/strengths, skills, needs, and body type.

Health subjects include physical, psychological, social, and emotional issues relative to puberty and their lives.

World Geography 7:

Want to enjoy all expenses paid travel to new countries? See men wearing skirts? Become a powerful leader of an emerging nation? Carve up existing nations at will? Yes? All this and more awaits you when you take World Geography. Don't miss this fascinating and exciting experience, coming soon to a classroom near you (popcorn not provided).

America in the 20th Century (Grade 8):

Ever wonder why Prozac wouldn't have helped the Great Depression, or why Truman was famous BEFORE the Jim Carrey movie, or why the term "hippie" doesn't always refer to cellulite? Find out! Go with us from the Oakies to Jackie O, from Agent Orange to Agent 007. Discover that the New Deal has nothing to do with poker, and that Benito Mussolini is not a pasta dish in an Italian restaurant.

Why did children in the 1950's suddenly start wearing raccoon hats and mouse ears? What do the birds doves and hawks have to do with the undeclared Vietnam War (and how does a nation fight an "undeclared" war?) Who was Jackie Robinson, and what would Michael Jordan think of him? Swoon to the tunes of Glenn Miller and Tommy Dorsey, then meet the singer known as "The Pelvis." Find out that Bill Haley and the Comets had nothing to do with taking "one great leap for mankind" on the surface of the moon.

Whether it's called "Days of Your Parents' and Grandparents' Lives," "The Bold and the Baby Boomers" (perhaps it should be "The Balding and the Baby Boomers"), or "General Eisenhower Hospital," this course will teach you about the lives and times that led up to your own. Remember, as they say right before the commercial, "Like the sands in the hourglass (pause for effect) these are the days of our lives."