

LOWER SCHOOL CURRICULUM

St. Paul's Lower School, from Kindergarten through fourth grade, enrolls both boys and girls. In these formative years, our students begin to develop the essential habits of mind they will need to succeed - at St. Paul's and in life. Equally important, the Lower School years are a time for children to acquire an appetite for learning, a curiosity about the world, a heartfelt concern for others, and a confidence in their own abilities and accomplishments. Throughout, we provide the solid foundation of skills that children need to discover and reach their greatest promise: intellectually, socially, physically, emotionally, and spiritually.

Values are integrated throughout the curriculum through thematic studies, Character Counts, diversity studies, health and wellness programs, and morning meetings. We emphasize individual self-worth, conflict resolution, compassion for the needy, responsibility to others, and positive decision-making. We stress the appreciation of religious, cultural, and ethnic differences and similarities in the world.

ENGLISH/LANGUAGE ARTS

St. Paul's Lower School uses a Balanced Literacy approach to reading and writing instruction. This includes read alouds, minilessons, shared reading, guided reading, strategy lessons, conferring, and independent reading. Our classrooms are reading and writing communities where students grow in both independence and stamina. Using a workshop approach, readers spend time in "Just Right" texts that are matched to their reading ability. They share their love of books while exploring various genres and participating in discussions with their classmates. Students have access to a levelled library of high-interest literature to meet them at their reading ability. Daily word study is integrated into the literacy block and supports both the reading and writing curriculum.

HISTORY/SOCIAL STUDIES

The Lower School social studies program encompasses history, geography, current events, and international mindedness. Students are exposed to age appropriate content and skills which enables them to acquire an understanding of themselves and of society in relation to the human condition over time. This foundation leads students to develop a sense of global citizenship and empathy for others. The social studies curriculum attempts to help students cultivate an understanding and appreciation for the human story. Through the study of history/social studies students will:

- Acquire an understanding of diverse cultures and of shared humanity
- Recognize the importance of individuals and events which have made a difference in society
- Develop an understanding of how geography affects people and places on earth

MATHEMATICS

The focal points of the Lower School math curriculum are:

- Number and operations
- Geometry
- Measurement
- Data analysis
- Place Value
- Time and Money
- Fractions

The common standards spiral through the grade levels, recognizing the need for introductory and continuing experiences related to the focal points at other grade levels.

The common standards are taught through a standards-based curriculum at each grade level. Problems are presented using a variety of mediums including role-playing, stories and literature, Number Talks, hands-on learning, pictures and graphs, and real objects. Students work independently, in pairs, in cooperative learning groups, and on whole-class endeavors. Students apply the processes of reasoning and proof to solve problems in the real world and their everyday lives. The curriculum is designed to enable students to be:

- Creative and efficient problem solvers
- Technologically aware
- Enthusiastic and effective in communicating mathematically with others

SCIENCE

The Hub is the Lower School's immersive science and engineering lab; combining science, engineering, project based learning, a maker space, as well as the community garden. Students apply scientific concepts by engaging in various design and engineering challenges. In addition, social studies comes to life when students participate in project based learning opportunities related to their units of study.

The Community Garden, accessible from The Hub, serves all students K-12 as an outdoor, hands-on learning space. Students discover life sciences first hand, by caring for our plants and animals. The Hub offers additional opportunities for students to engage in science and engineering clubs at no additional cost, before, during, and after school.

Example Projects from each grade level include:

- Kindergarten students play Bumper Bowling to apply force and motion concepts and a field trip to the maintenance shed to discover how machines lighten the load for people.
- Pre-First students completed a campus design project to improve and beautify the landscape around our flagpole.
- First Grade students applied their studies of color and light to create beautiful stained glass for The Hub.
- Second Grade students, combining life science studies and studies of matter with their Native American Social Studies unit, harvested our three sisters' garden, and are evaluating the properties and uses of corn.
- Third Grade student, in conjunction with their homeroom study of The Chesapeake Bay, will engage in project based learning activities to improve our Bay on campus, locally, and beyond.
- Fourth Grade student will design and build a ride to test in their capstone "Tour de Fourth" event.

MODERN LANGUAGE

Spanish and Japanese are offered in the Lower School. In Kindergarten and Pre-first, students are introduced to both languages. Rising first grade students select one of these languages for study throughout the Lower School years. All classes emphasize oral language through conversation, skits, games, and songs. The main goals of the Lower School program are to develop basic oral language proficiency and to stimulate awareness of the cultures and lifestyles of the people who speak the languages. The Modern Language department has set specific goals to be attained by students by the completion of their language study in the Upper School. These goals are:

- To develop oral and written proficiency on an advanced level
- To foster an appreciation of language and culture in all of their dimensions
- To encourage the use of technology and travel abroad in the acquisition of language skills and cultural understanding

ARTS

The Lower School arts courses include visual arts and music. In visual arts, students develop the aesthetic use of line, form, color, and texture. Skills introduced to the students include drawing, painting, ceramics, printmaking, collage, sculpture, and weaving techniques.

MUSIC

Music is taught through a sequential, structured curriculum that fosters the enjoyment of music through active participation with an emphasis on singing. Children's Choirs of St. Paul's – The *Trichords* (second and third grade students) and the *Leading Tones* (fourth grade students) perform throughout the year. Each grade has their own unique opportunity to perform for a larger audience.

LIBRARY

The Lower School Library program has two main goals. One is to provide a diverse collection of both literary enjoyment and curricular enrichment for students to become readers and life-long learners. The other is to provide instruction so students can utilize the variety of research materials and tools needed to feel competent when using the facilities. The program is structured to follow a sequential pattern that is age appropriate. In addition, many different types of genres, authors, and reading materials are explored to enhance the literary enjoyment.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

At the core of each physical education class are three general objectives. First and foremost, class procedures and activities are designed to teach each student the importance of physical fitness. Second, class instruction is combined with opportunities to help students learn basic locomotor patterns, kinesthetic awareness, and age appropriate sport related skills. Finally, class sessions allow students to engage in positive social interaction in large and small group settings.

LOWER SCHOOL STUDENT PROGRAMS AND ORGANIZATIONS

- Big Buddy Program
- Blue-Gold Competition
- Children's Choirs of St. Paul's – The *Trichords* and the *Leading Tones*
- Service Learning - Lunches for the Hungry, Lenten Meal for Paul's Place
- Student Council
- Student Vestry
- Crusie Cast