



Journeys School of Teton Science Schools

Integrating ecology, culture and community to ensure academic excellence and personal success in a Pre-Kindergarten through 12th grade college-preparatory, independent school setting.

August 30, 2010

Dear Journeys School Elementary Families,

We are excited to have your family enrolled in the elementary school program this year! The program is based on the four pillars of academic excellence, extraordinary relationships, place-based education and global citizenship. Implemented by an exceptionally talented group of educators with experience and expertise, the program is unique in the region and leads the way in innovative and challenging elementary school education. Before the busy school year begins, we encourage you to review the following important components of the program for 2010-11. More details will be provided at the information session this Thursday, September 2nd at 5 PM in the elementary school building.

Program

- The program is a carefully structured, customized and integrated to maximize learning for each child.
- Reading and writing curricula is aligned throughout the elementary school.
- Extended journeys and the Capstone Program remain hallmarks of the elementary school program.
- Curricular themes are aligned at all grade levels providing an integrated context for students to see relevance in their school work. This year's theme is Mountain Communities.
- The collaborative nature of the elementary school faculty team allows for a seamless transition of students from one grade to the next, as well as uniformity in philosophy and approach. This consistency is important for the success of all students.
- A whole child approach is essential to our curriculum. Our academic program challenges all students to excel in the traditional disciplines and the whole child approach is essential to develop skills of creativity, collaboration, compassion, leadership, and community awareness. Multi-age experiences through our family group program, leadership program, and student teaching opportunities (i.e. book buddies) provide opportunities to develop these skills.
- To ensure the development of both the academic and social-emotional realms, advisors this year will focus on the social-emotional growth of students while classroom teachers will be available for routine meetings including new scheduled evening meetings to discuss academic growth.
- In addition to the regular assessment that is completed internally within all classes, students will be completing formal assessments of progress four times a year in math and language arts to measure growth. Piloted last spring, this online assessment provides data to help inform instruction for each student. Students in grades 3-5 will likely move to an online CTP 4 testing system in the spring to allow for faster and better analysis of standardized scores.
- A new afterschool enrichment program is being piloted this fall for third through fifth grade. Both Spanish and robotics/engineering will be offered in the fall.

Schedule

- Reading, writing, and math will occur throughout the morning with students placed in developmentally appropriate groups (similar to previous years).
- Spanish, visual/performing arts, physical education, science, and social studies will occur in the afternoons with Kindergarten through 2nd grade students in different rotations than 3rd – 5th grade students (similar to previous years)
- Community meetings will occur with similar age students weekly, with monthly all-elementary school meetings.
- Advisory groups are composed of similar age students.
- Technology and leadership will occur on Friday afternoons for all students in developmentally appropriate groupings.



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- School will end at 3:30 PM each day which adds two weeks of instructional time to our schedule over the course of the year. While appropriately tending to the needs of our youngest students with read aloud and exploration time, older students will experience a variety of academic experiences at the end of the day including capstone meetings and math/literacy lab.

Staffing

- The elementary school team meets weekly to discuss progress of students and the coordination of curriculum. Collaborative planning and teaching are used frequently to enhance the student experience.
- Betsy Trowbridge has accepted a position as Lower School Curriculum Coordinator. Her job will be to supervise and oversee assessment, curriculum and instruction for all students and teachers in grades PK-5. Sydney Daniels will remain lead teacher within the K-5 program and help guide the program in Betsy's absence. Betsy is on maternity leave until November. During this time I will be present in the classrooms to support all faculty as needed.
- Kalen Kleyman, Chris Bessonette, Sydney Daniels, Jill Wright, Ashley Mudge, Shannon Shuptrine, Bari Bucholz, Kjera Strom Henrie, and John Gillum, will be joined by adjunct faculty Jeff Bratz (music/drama) and Ellie Levins (visual arts). We have also reinvigorated an intern program at the school. The cohort this year includes Chessie MacRae, Bart Liles, and Lindsay Wagner. While they will not be teaching individual classes, they will be involved with students in a variety of ways within the classroom. Chessie will be focused on the younger grades, Bart on the older grades, and Lindsay in the administrative offices as well as the leadership program.
- Staffing levels are always dependent on enrollment and class sizes typically range from 10-15 students depending on age. Interns and learning specialists are staffed in some classes dependent on student needs.
- Students with different learning needs (acceleration or remediation) will be supported by Travis Gay and Yvette Werner.

Professional Development

- Through the use of consultants and professional development, the elementary school will focus on instruction (specifically math instruction) and differentiation (classroom practices to challenge all students) this coming year. A review of our K-12 language arts and math curriculum is also underway by an outside consultant. Our commitment to continuous improvement is an important component of our school.

The faculty is energized and ready for a great year. By this point, you have been contacted by your child's advisor to answer any questions that you might have. Again, we hope that all of you can attend the elementary school information session beginning at 5 PM on Thursday, September 2nd in the Elementary School building (childcare provided) followed by our annual potluck at 6 PM. We will see you on Wednesday morning!

Respectfully,



Nate McClennen
Head of School

and

Elementary School Faculty