

# Program of Studies

Berkshire Country Day School

*Where you belong.*

**Middle School**  
2012-13

# Advisory Program

Middle and Upper School Homeroom Teachers in Grades 4–9 serve as advisors to a group of students in their respective grades. Advisors are advocates for their advisees and keep abreast of their advisees' progress throughout the school year by soliciting information from teachers at faculty meetings and from meeting with their advisees on a weekly basis.

Advisors also serve as the first line of contact between their advisees' parents and the school for a question or concern of a general nature. If the question pertains to a particular class, parents should contact the teacher of the course. If steps need to be taken to effect changes in the behavior of or academic support for an advisee, the advisor will set up a conference with parents, class teachers and/or the Associate Head of School to develop a plan of action.

The advisors meet frequently with their advisees as well as hold two dedicated advisory periods per week. These advisory blocks are used for the social curriculum. Positive personal and social growth is central to the BCD mission. Goal setting and self-reflection is an important part of our program. Advisory block conversations include a variety of topics such as respect, responsibility, courage, value systems, decision-making, tolerance, excellence, success, manners, and service. These topics stem from the pillars of BCD's core values: Originality, Quality, Respect, Sustainability, Community, Wellness and Citizenship.

## **Advisors**

Grade 4 Sarah Pitcher-Hoffman, Jeff Uhas

Grade 5 Marilyn Cromwell, Jilly Lederman

Grade 6 Geoff Perkins, Alexis Watts

Grade 7 Geoff Ashworth, Kathy Clausen

Grade 8 Tim Gore, Gail Heady

Grade 9 Amy Brentano, Elizabeth Downes

# Grade 4

## Art

**Marilyn Orner Cromwell**

Art is an integral part of a BCD education. The overwhelming flood of images in our daily life makes a strong case for the study of visual language. Over the years, students have an opportunity to create artwork in a studio setting, to learn principles of art and to learn to reflect on artwork. The emphasis will be on understanding how to read a work of art, and on making art, with art history being taught peripherally through the study of individual artists, movements in art, slides and videos, and reproductions. Art is also an avenue to learn to appreciate and respect the richness of other cultures. I work with other teachers to coordinate art projects with student studies. Knowing about the time period and manipulating relevant materials enhances both experiences. I incorporate other arts into some assignments in order to tap into areas where every student is comfortable.

The art room does offer a change for students from other academic subjects. First, it is a large, messy space. Let your child know if you want him/her to use a smock, or send them to school in casual clothes on art days. More importantly, in art, there is the opportunity for individual growth through invention, exploration, and synthesis. Art encourages divergent thinking. I hope to foster students' ability to seek solutions to the problems the assignments set for them through their own reflection, to learn to value multiple responses, and to provide the setting for creative thinking to occur. These are all skills that our increasingly global, complex world will require of them. There is flexibility both in the projects I present and in the time the student has to complete them. The Art Department offers a variety of experiences with drawing, painting, printmaking, sculpture, collage, textiles, and design. Photography may be employed too, with and without cameras. There are certain projects that are cornerstones of each grade level program. The projects build upon skills and past experiences while offering greater depth and new materials. The program is responsive to student interests, opportunities that arise, and my search for new and better ideas. Finally, the art room is a place where a lot more happens than creating artwork. There are a lot of interactions that take place in the art room. It is these interactions, as well as specific art works, upon which the comments are based.

Fourth Graders will broaden their skills and art experiences through self portraits, table decoration sculptures for the Thanksgiving Soup, learning about collage and positive and negative space, and by painting large scale works. In addition, they will make state stamps and bark paintings to parallel their studies in Humanities, and Mardi Gras / Carnival masks for Modern Foreign languages. In the

spring we will visit the outdoor sculpture park at Art Omi.

## Middle School Chorus

**Amy Hilliard**

Students in grades 4-6 participate in Chorus once a week. The focus is on building community as well as preparation for concerts and performances. Emphasis is placed on proper breathing and vocal techniques as students sing a wide variety of repertoire. Students will be singing in unison, canon and 2-part harmony.

## Computer

**Maureen Tumenas**

Our goal is to help the students become proficient in computer applications and the use of computers as problem-solving tools in a team environment. To accomplish this, students will work individually and in teams on projects designed to use various applications and to incorporate their assignments in other classes. Fourth graders will be involved in a collaborative global project. For the 2012-13 school year they will work on a FlatClassroom project called, A Week in the Life, interacting with students across the globe.

Fourth graders will be introduced to the basic parts of the computer and some of the terminology used to describe computers. They will also be introduced to Google Apps and begin to use the various applications available to them. They will begin to learn more about Internet safety and explore copyright issues. Programs introduced will be keyboarding, with Type to Learn4, Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and Inspiration (a graphic organizer), as well as several online programs such as VoiceThread and EduGlogster. Students will learn how to use networked computers, and how to manage files.

The students in Grade 4 will receive letter grades as well as effort grades. Fourth graders meet twice a week. Letter grades are based on keyboarding, class work, positive participation in class and major projects. Each grade level has a keyboarding goal. The goal for Grade 4 is 15 words per minute with 90% accuracy.

## French

**Elizabeth Downes**

The goal in Fourth Grade French class is to help students develop the confidence and ability to

understand and speak basic spoken French with an authentic French accent. Classes are conducted primarily in French by having students recite, sing and learn in French-immersion style instruction. Grammar and vocabulary are presented in a variety of ways designed to elicit the students' active participation. Techniques include: reading and listening to stories, singing songs, playing games, performing short skits, as well as taking short hikes in nature and cooking. The introduction of fundamental grammar is continued with the goal of learning to read and write simple French sentences. Learning to spell correctly is also stressed. Students spend the year creating their own French cahier which contains all the important work from the academic year. The cahier is also a useful organizational tool because it unifies the material covered in class. One important theme of the year is Nature Studies, and students spend some of their classes outside on the campus. Grades are based on classroom participation and work in our French notebooks, homework, quizzes, listening and speaking assessments and longer projects.

Materials:

- Bon Voyage, textbook and workbook adapted for use in the cahier.
- The French cahier – the students spend the year creating their own “textbook.”
- Additional media and realia from our French library and online.
- Supplemental materials as needed.

## Spanish

**Amy Sanchez**

Our goal is to help the students to understand and speak Spanish language in a variety of simple contexts, to increase their comfort with the language, and then to read and write sentences using words and phrases with which they are already familiar. They will gain experience in asking simple questions and responding in the positive or negative. Topics include greetings, numbers, colors, the alphabet, the calendar and birthdays, classroom objects, food, members of the family, animals, and weather.

Active participation is encouraged. The students will speak, read, and write complete sentences using the book and workbook Vale. They will develop the ability to create their own sentences, at first using the Vale materials to support them and later using their imaginations to generate their own.

Activities will be extended to include additional games and interactive exercises, songs, stories, and cultural materials from Hispanic countries. Projects will include some drawing that is relevant to the

subject they are studying. There will be many opportunities for the students to engage in simple conversation and to do prepared presentations, such as introducing themselves and their families, expressing some of their interests, or describing their artwork.

Games, songs, and skits will be used to aid retention and increase fluency.

Materials:

- Vale text and workbook, EMC Publishing
- Realia

## Humanities

**Sarah Pitcher-Hoffman, Jeff Uhas**

The Grade 4 English curriculum includes the study of reading, writing, vocabulary, spelling, grammar, hand-writing, oral expression, and the development of study skills. Our reading program is based upon literature chosen to stimulate a child's love of reading. Students read orally to reinforce word recognition and word attack skills as well as to develop fluency. Silent reading helps to strengthen comprehension skills and teaches students that reading can be a vehicle for gaining information and for personal enjoyment. Writing assignments are developed from the literature, from class discussions, and from creative springboards.

Students work with descriptive, narrative, expository, and poetic forms. Student compositions and poems are read aloud by the teacher or their authors so that the children will realize the importance of their writing. Word structures, synonyms, antonyms, homonyms, and dictionary, and thesaurus skills are covered to increase student understanding of word meanings and to improve writing skills. The study of phonics is reinforced through spelling lists. Grammar lessons, centering on the mechanics and structures of writing, are taught regularly.

Spelling quizzes, vocabulary quizzes, both open and closed book comprehension assessments, group projects, and writing assignments are means of evaluating student progress. Participation in class discussion and completion of homework assignments help determine a student's effort grade, as well as the achievement grade.

Texts

- *Handwriting* published by Zaner-Bloser

Novels may include:

*American Tall Tales; Bud, Not Buddy; Love that Dog; The Green Book; Maniac Magee; The Corn Grows Ripe*

The Grade 4 history program begins with a study of

world geography and mapping skills. The students apply these skills to an integrated study of the United States. This unit of study will culminate in a final project. In addition there is a yearlong creative mapping in which students design and create their own state. Then the focus will switch to our neighbor to the south, Mexico, where students will explore the ancient cultures of the Maya and the Aztec as well as the geography and culture of the area.

Students are taught from a variety of texts and primary sources, examples of visual art and music, maps, time lines and the news magazine Time for Kids. Students are encouraged to function independently, as well as in groups, as they examine facts and formulate ideas. Grades are based on quizzes, group and individual projects, and participation. Homework is given periodically throughout the year to complement that which is being done in class.

## Library

**Alexis Watts**

The library program at BCD seeks to support the overall mission of the school through providing an atmosphere which promotes inquiry, discovery, and academic excellence while realizing each student's unique potential.

The library serves as a resource for the entire BCD community, equipping faculty as well as students with materials that complement their courses of study. In addition to serving as a resource, the Middle School library program will continue to develop students' awareness of the library and its holdings, as well as materials available through partner organizations in order to equip the students with the skills and abilities to become information-literate and independent learners.

During their weekly scheduled classes, students will gain an understanding of the unique characteristics of various print and electronic media through the completion of projects including genre studies and guided research. Students will learn how to locate, use, and synthesize information from these various sources in order to create a finished product. These projects will be guided by students' interest and structured to incorporate material from other content areas to maintain the vital connection between the classroom and the library.

Finally, the library will continue to foster a love of literature. Current and classic works will be discussed, and students will have the opportunity to check out materials of their own choosing during each class period. Finally, students will be encouraged to visit the library outside of their

scheduled class period to further explore their own areas of interest.

## Math

**Jilly Lederman**

The main goal of the Grade 4 math curriculum is to have students solidify their computational skills as they expand on their conceptual framework. Students will use these skills to tackle problem-solving activities and to increase their ability to think mathematically. In addition to a review of basic skills, students will work on more complex multiplication and division algorithms, fraction concepts and operations, mathematical patterns, collecting, representing and interpreting data, decimal concepts, measurement and geometry, and problem solving. They will occasionally use calculators. Manipulative material will be available at all times to reinforce learning. Games are played to reinforce skills and to give students a feeling for probability and strategy. Additional projects and topics will be introduced as time and skill levels allow.

Assessments are both formal (tests, quizzes and projects) and informal (homework, class work, small group activities). Students will be involved in creating their own math portfolio to document progress in the fourth grade course.

## Music

**Amy Hilliard**

The fourth grade music program will include traditional children's songs and rhymes, classical music pieces, folktales, and selections from children's literature. The lessons will enrich your child's musical experiences, and they will also enhance his/her literacy and learning.

The core of each lesson will be thematically based... some seasonal, some on children's literature, and some based on the social studies and science themes your child is studying. Other lessons will be based on folktales, dances, and songs from around the world. One example of a fourth grade theme may be "The Sweetest Song", a mini-opera accompanied by Orff instruments and based on an African-American folktale. Another example would be learning the African song and dance "Funga Alafia", which requires the children to improvise on large African-style drums, accompanied by an Orff ensemble.

Recorder study will continue in fourth grade as the children add more notes to their repertoire. The study of musical form, rhythm, melody, and timbre will all be expanded during this year as children begin to

compose their own music in small groups.

## Physical Education

**Gail Heady**

The physical education program in the Middle School becomes more challenging for the students. We expect the children to work harder and spend a greater length of time working on the skills involved in the specific sport we are learning. We offer a variety of lifetime and team sports throughout the three years that the children are in the Middle School.

In the fall and spring, we administer a physical fitness test to determine if each child is within the average range of overall fitness. The test covers abdominal strength, upper body strength, flexibility, and aerobic capacity. Competition does exist, but playing for fun where you can strive for a personal goal and focus on displaying a skill is more important. We emphasize cooperation, respect for each other, showing enthusiasm, and learning to compromise with each other. Good sportsmanship is a valuable tool to possess in and out of the classroom.

## Science

**Tim Gore**

Grade 4 science begins with physics in the context of simple machines. Levers, screws, pulleys, inclined planes, and gears will be investigated. The culmination will be a team project in which students will build and present a machine of their own design. They will regularly record the learning in lab notebooks. Through late fall, winter, and early spring, students will also be studying birds. As a class we are participating in Classroom Feederwatch, a program run by Cornell University.

We will conclude in spring with the Voyage of the Mimi program, where the focus will be on whales, the ocean, and environmental issues. The big spring event is a whale watch trip with the New England Aquarium.

Through the various labs this year, the students will learn to write a basic lab report, observe and make predictions, draw conclusions, and make graphs from data collected during experiments. Evaluation is based on the successful completion of quizzes, unit tests, projects, homework, and positive engagement in class.

# Grade 5

## Art

**Marilyn Orner Cromwell**

Art is an integral part of a BCD education. The overwhelming flood of images in our daily life makes a strong case for the study of visual language. Over the years, students have an opportunity to create artwork in a studio setting, to learn principles of art and to learn to reflect on artwork. The emphasis will be on understanding how to read a work of art, and on making art, with art history being taught peripherally through the study of individual artists, movements in art, slides and videos, and reproductions. Art is also an avenue to learn to appreciate and respect the richness of other cultures. I work with other teachers to coordinate art projects with student studies. Knowing about the time period and manipulating relevant materials enhances both experiences. I incorporate other arts into some assignments in order to tap into areas where every student is comfortable.

The art room does offer a change for students from other academic subjects. First, it is a large, messy space. Let your child know if you want him/her to use a smock, or send them to school in casual clothes on art days. More importantly, in art, there is the opportunity for individual growth through invention, exploration, and synthesis. Art encourages divergent thinking. I hope to foster students' ability to seek solutions to the problems the assignments set for them through their own reflection, to learn to value multiple responses, and to provide the setting for creative thinking to occur. These are all skills that our increasingly global, complex world will require of them. There is flexibility both in the projects I present and in the time the student has to complete them. The Art Department offers a variety of experiences with drawing, painting, printmaking, sculpture, collage, textiles and design. Photography maybe employed too, with and without cameras. There are certain projects that are corner-stones of each grade level program. The projects build upon skills and past experiences while offering greater depth and new materials. The program is responsive to student interests, opportunities that arise, and my search for new and better ideas. Finally, the art room is a place where a lot more happens than creating artwork. There are a lot of interactions that take place in the art room. It is these interactions, as well as specific art works, upon which the comments are based.

Fifth graders will begin the year making work that is a thoughtful response to themselves and their environment. They will make sculptural clay masks. They will create work that connects to their history curriculum, including mandala plates. We will repeat the joint French, Spanish, and Art Mardi Gras celebration for which they will create masks and any needed scenery and props. Drawing and collage will

explore analogous color and one point perspective as they begin to utilize more sophisticated skills. I plan to repeat the trip to the Twentieth Century Wing of The Metropolitan Museum. A major culminating art experience that involves researching and representing any visual artist, our "Lunch Party," will cap the year.

## Middle School Chorus

**Amy Hilliard**

Students in grades 4-6 participate in Chorus once a week. The focus is on preparation for concerts and performances. Emphasis is placed on proper breathing and vocal techniques, and a variety of repertoire is selected for these performances. Students will be singing in unison, canon, and 2-part harmony.

## Computer

**Maureen Tumenas**

Our goal is to help the students become proficient in computer applications and the use of computers as problem-solving tools in a team environment. To accomplish this, students will work individually and in teams on projects designed to use various applications and to incorporate their assignments in other classes. Fifth graders will be involved in a collaborative global project. For the 2012-13 school year they will work on a FlatClassroom project called, A Week in the Life, interacting with students across the globe.

Fifth computer class meets twice a week in the computer lab. Students continue to build keyboarding skills using Type to Learn4. We review the basic parts of the computer and file management. They continue to develop word processing and organizational skills using Microsoft Word, Excel, Inspiration (a graphic organizer) and PowerPoint. We also begin to explore a bit of programming, using Scratch, or Alice. Fifth graders will continue to explore various online tools, including Google Apps, eduGlogster, VoiceThread and more. Throughout the year good digital citizenship, as well as Internet safety will be emphasized.

Students will receive letter grades as well as effort grades. Letter grades are based on keyboarding, classwork and participation, and major projects. The keyboarding goal for Grade 5 is 20 words per minute with 90% accuracy.

## English

**Sarah Pitcher-Hoffman & Jeff Uhas**

Grade 5 English is a continuation and expansion of skills, themes, and concepts that were introduced in fourth grade English.

In fifth grade the students will continue to work on the writing process of taking an original, or seed idea, and developing it through careful editing to a final project. Editing will be done in conferences with a teacher, with peers, and alone. Topics may include personal narrative, poetry, myths, persuasive pieces, short stories, mysteries, and book projects. Students will write both creative and expository pieces, which will be gathered into an anthology at the end of the year. In addition, students will present finished pieces to an audience which will help to develop public speaking skills.

The spelling/vocabulary program is based on Latin roots and words from the curriculum. Grammar and mechanics are taught regularly using a variety of sources.

A variety of texts will be read and discussed that will introduce many themes, including peer and family relationships, coming of age stories, mystery, and myth. The history course in Grade 5 complements this English course. As students learn about ancient civilizations, such as the Greeks, Romans, Egyptians and the people of China and India, they will read tales and legends of these cultures.

Texts: *Surviving the Applewhites*, *Number the Stars*, *Chasing Vermeer*, *D'aulaires' Book of Greek Myths*, *The Search for Delicious* and various tales from around the world.

## French

**Elizabeth Downes**

The goal in Fifth Grade French class is to help students develop the confidence and ability to understand and speak basic spoken French with an authentic French accent. Classes are conducted primarily in French by having students recite, sing and learn in French-immersion style instruction. Grammar and vocabulary are presented in a variety of ways designed to elicit the students' active participation. Techniques include: reading and listening to stories, singing songs, playing games, performing short skits, as well as drawing and cooking. The introduction of fundamental grammar continues with the goal of learning to refine reading and writing in French. Learning to spell correctly is also stressed by teaching the phonetic system in French. Students spend the year creating their own French cahier which contains all the important

work from the academic year. The cahier is also a useful organizational tool because it unifies the material covered in class. One important theme of the year is the study of the ancient cave drawings in France. Students learn the story of how the caves at Lascaux and Chauvet were discovered, and after learning about how the cave-dwellers lived, they make their own "cave drawings" that are displayed in the classroom. Grades are based on classroom participation and work in our French notebooks, homework, quizzes, listening and speaking assessments and longer projects.

Materials:

- *Bon Voyage*, workbook, video and audio materials
- Additional media and realia from our French library
- Supplemental material as needed
- Realia

## Spanish

**Amy Sanchez**

Our goal is to help children become increasingly comfortable hearing, speaking, reading and writing Spanish, and to become familiar with some of the cultural traditions in Hispanic countries. A variety of expressions and vocabulary will be introduced so that the students can understand and learn to independently generate their own conversations. Topics covered will include greetings, calendar, seasons, clothing, animals, numbers, and food.

Classes will be conducted primarily in Spanish. The classroom will be a place where lively oral activities give students a chance to generate language as much as possible. Songs, games, poems, role-play, skits, and Realia will be used to put the language into a fun and challenging context for learning. Through repeated and consistent use of common phrases and classroom routines in Spanish, students will begin to gain an intuitive sense of grammatical structures. Oral proficiency is the ultimate goal; writing and reading are used to support that goal. The cultivation of a good Spanish accent and exposure to Hispanic culture will be integrated into our lessons.

Materials:

- *Vale*, EMC Publishing, textbook and workbook
- Realia

## History

**Jilly Lederman**

The Ancient History course in fifth grade is designed to instill in the students an appreciation and interest

in peoples of the past. The children spend the year learning about major ancient civilizations: Mesopotamia, Egypt, Greece, Rome, China, and India. In addition, other units covered include Phoenicians, Hebrews, Minoans and Mycenaeans as well as ancient civilizations in Africa and the Americas. In each case, the focus is on how these ancient people met the challenges of establishing and maintaining a civilized society and how they contributed to our civilization today. Having learned that “a culture is a people’s whole way of life,” the children examine the geography, class structure, government, economy, diet, clothing, housing, educational system, arts, and religion of each society, and thus they are introduced to many disciplines within the area of social studies. Archaeology is emphasized, and the children soon understand that by studying artifacts, paintings, and sculpture, they can assess a people’s technological level of advancement and cultural identity.

Skills which are continually practiced are: reading for content, labeling and reading maps, reading charts, copying notes from the board, taking notes from a text, participating in class discussions, listening to others, and assessing the relative importance of items in a list. Students will also learn research skills and synthesis. They will learn to use educational internet sites to augment their knowledge. As the year progresses, the interaction between human beings and their environment, the relationship between cause and effect, and the comparing and contrasting of cultures are emphasized as pivotal concepts.

During each unit of the course, the children work on different projects, some of which are coordinated with the Shop and Art Departments. The projects will allow students to visualize and participate more fully in the lives of the people of ancient times. Videos featuring excavations of the sites being studied are shown on a regular basis. And last but not least, a major part of the fifth grade field trip to The Metropolitan Museum in New York City is a tour of the Egyptian, Greek, Etruscan and Roman collections.

Homework, short papers, tests, quizzes, and projects are all used to reinforce the material presented in class and in the readings. Students will develop research skills throughout the year and will write brief research papers on several units.

Texts:

- *The Story of the World: Volume One* by Susan Wise Bauer
- *Usborne Encyclopedia of World Religions*

## Library

### Alexis Watts

During their weekly scheduled classes, students will gain an understanding of the unique characteristics of various print and electronic media through the completion of projects including genre studies and guided research. Students will learn how to locate, use, and synthesize information from these various sources in order to create a finished product. These projects will be guided by students’ interest and structured to incorporate material from other content areas to maintain the vital connection between the classroom and the library.

Finally, the library will continue to foster a love of literature. Current and classic works will be discussed, and students will have the opportunity to check out materials of their own choosing during each class period. Finally, students will be encouraged to visit the library outside of their scheduled class period to further explore their own areas of interest.

## Math

### Ned Douglas, Geoff Perkins

When we teach math to students in Grade 5, we try to capitalize on their natural curiosity, enthusiasm, and energy to reinforce skills and foster a positive attitude toward mathematics. We also work with the students to create the foundation for solid study habits.

This is the year when we try to solidify whole number operations, and then move to operations with fractions and decimals. Students also work with geometry, measurement, and number theory. Percents are introduced along with some ideas that lead eventually to Algebra. We use problem solving throughout the program. Manipulative materials are used to develop an understanding of abstract concepts. We work with calculators occasionally so that students can gain a realistic understanding of their uses and limitations. Enrichment and the extension of topics under consideration are made available to everyone, in order to give all students a chance to experience the possibilities. The text we use is Scott Foresman– Addison Wesley: Math— Level 5 in combination with “Accelerated Math” from Renaissance Learning. We also use work sheets, games, puzzles and manipulative materials as appropriate. Homework is given on average four nights a week, and tests and quizzes are given to help assess progress and to make students more comfortable with regular assessment.

## Music

**Amy Hilliard**

The music program provides an opportunity for all students to become actively involved in four basic areas of musical experience: creating, performing, listening, and history. There is great emphasis on singing and a wide range of folk songs, part-songs, rounds, and canons are used. Music notation and symbols are taught through singing, playing Orff instruments and recorders, and folk dancing. These activities emphasize an awareness of melody, harmony, rhythm, timbre, and form. In addition, much time is spent developing self-confidence and the physical discipline of musical performance, as well as learning to be a good critical listener and a polite, supportive audience member.

Students will also explore music composition techniques on the computer using the GarageBand program.

## Physical Education

**Gail Heady**

The physical education program in the Middle School becomes more challenging for the students. We expect the children to work harder and spend a greater length of time working on the skills involved in the specific sport we are learning. We offer a variety of lifetime and team sports throughout the three years that the children are in the Middle School.

In the fall and spring, we administer a physical fitness test to determine if each child is within the average range of overall fitness. The test covers abdominal strength, upper body strength, flexibility and aerobic capacity.

Competition does exist, but playing for fun where you can strive for a personal goal and focus on displaying a skill is more important. We emphasize cooperation, respect for each other, showing enthusiasm, and learning to compromise with each other. Good sportsmanship is a valuable tool to possess in and out of the classroom.

Please make sure your child has extra sneakers for Fitzpatrick Hall. We will send a written notification after three times without appropriate footwear.

## Science

**Tim Gore**

The Grade 5 science curriculum follows a more structured path than that of Lower School or Grade 4. The theme for the year is Life Science. Students begin the fall by exploring the topic of cells. They use microscopes, learn vocabulary, and experiment with diffusion. Other major topics for the year include: the digestive, circulatory, and respiratory systems; the worm; plant growth and structure; long-term plant experiments; and stream life. The spring trimester includes a study of human development that focuses on the reproductive system and puberty. Classroom activities include lectures, notes, research, experiments, hands-on exploration, and study games. Learning by doing is stressed. Depending on the activity, students work individually, in small groups, or as a class. Evaluation is based on successful completion of homework, quizzes, tests, reports/projects, and notebooks, as well as positive engagement in class.

Materials:

- *Human Body Systems* (Glencoe Science, publisher)
- *Super Science Magazine* (Scholastic)

# Grade 6

## Art

**Marilyn Orner Cromwell**

Art is an integral part of a BCD education. All students have art classes twice a week. Visual language, a powerful tool for communication and expression, is taught. Over the years, students have an opportunity to create artwork in a studio setting, to learn principles of art and to learn to reflect on artwork. The emphasis is on making art, with art history being taught through the study of individual artists, movements in art, slides and videos, and reproductions. Art is also an avenue to learn to appreciate and respect the richness of creativity in other cultures. I work with other teachers to coordinate art projects with student studies. Knowing about the time period and manipulating relevant materials enhances both experiences. I incorporate other arts into some assignments in order to tap into areas where every student is comfortable.

The art room does offer a change for students from other academic subjects. First, it is a large, messy space. More importantly, in art, there are as many right answers as there are children. There is the opportunity for individual growth through invention and exploration. Art encourages divergent thinking. I hope to foster students' ability to seek solutions to the problems the assignments set for them through their own reflection, to learn to value multiple responses, and to think creatively. These are all skills that our increasingly global, complex world will require of them. There is flexibility both in the projects I present and in the time the student has to complete them. The Art Department offers a variety of experiences with drawing, painting, printmaking, sculpture, collage, textiles and design. Photography maybe employed too, with and without cameras. There are certain projects that are cornerstones of each grade level program. The projects build upon skills and past experiences while offering greater depth and new materials. The program is responsive to student interests, opportunities that arise, and my constant search for new and better ideas. Finally, the art room is a place where a lot more happens than creating artwork. There are a lot of interactions that take place in the art room. It is these interactions, as well as specific art works, upon which the comments are based.

In the fall, sixth graders will study landscape as subject matter for art and simultaneously explore the work of the Hudson River School painters. We will take a trip to Olana, former home of Hudson River painter Frederic Church, in Hudson, NY. Students will also explore portraiture in many different ways, including creating a character from a plaster mask built on their own face. They will make a series of portrait-related drawings and a self-portrait painting.

## Middle School Chorus

**Amy Hilliard**

Students in grades 4-6 participate in Chorus once a week. The focus is on preparation for concerts and performances. Emphasis is placed on proper breathing and vocal techniques, and a variety of repertoire is selected for these performances. Students will be singing in unison, canon, and 2-part harmony.

## Computer

**Maureen Tumenas**

Our goal is to help the students become proficient in computer applications and the use of computers as problem-solving tools in a team environment. To accomplish this, students will work individually and in teams on projects designed to use various applications and to incorporate their assignments in other classes. Sixth graders will be involved in at least one collaborative global project. For the 2012-13 school year they will work with students in El Salvador on one or two projects- a project called A Better World- using the UN Millenium Goals to come up with potential solutions to global issues and/or working on a Google SketchUp project, narrating in Spanish or French.

By the end of Middle School, students should have a firm grasp of how technology relates to information management and communication. They should be comfortable with keyboarding, word processing, file management, spreadsheets, desktop publishing, introductory programming, multi-media, and introductory graphic design. They should understand the issues and importance of responsible, effective, and ethical Internet use and demonstrate good digital citizenship. The students should see the computer as a tool that they can use both to research and learn about the world around them and to create new media and to collaborate with others.

Sixth graders will use keyboarding software- Type to Learn4, Typer Shark. Microsoft Office Suite, Corel VideoStudioPro, Google SketchUp and Inspiration as well as many other online tools will be used for various projects. Students in Grade 6 have class twice a week and will receive letter grades as well as effort grades. Grades are based on keyboarding, class work, and participation and major projects. The keyboarding goal for Grade 6 is 25 words per minute with 90% accuracy.

## English

Alexis Watts

The Grade 6 English curriculum includes literature and activities which continue to develop skills of comprehension and self-expression. The sixth grade year is critical to the awakening of interpretative skills, the emergence of symbolic thinking, and growing awareness of social order and moral structure. Using these developmental opportunities, a course of reading has been selected to reflect on the ways in which a society deals with its fears of differences. Through a variety of novels and readings, students explore how stereotypes are created, how prejudice thrives, and how we as individuals and as a society might respond. Class discussion, short compositions, critical analysis, art, and debate are among the techniques employed to approach these topics. Students are exposed to a variety of literary elements, including simile, metaphor, hyperbole, foreshadowing, and personification. Work in grammar, spelling, and vocabulary skills is carried on throughout the year.

This year, the students will read the following novels:

- *City of Ember* (read over the summer in preparation for Grade 6 English)
- *Woods Runner*
- *Out of the Dust*
- *Pictures of Hollis Woods*
- *The King of Shadows*
- *Rules of the Game 1*
- *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry*
- *The Giver*

## French

Maria Whalen

Our goal is to help students develop the confidence and ability to understand and express themselves in a variety of everyday subjects in French. Basic French grammar will be formally introduced, as well as reading and writing. Oral proficiency is the primary focus. Students will learn about France and the Francophone world, their culture and traditions.

Classes will be conducted primarily in French. Topics will be presented in a variety of ways designed to elicit the student's active participation. Techniques include communicative exercises, songs, games, skits, writing and reading. The program will be supported by a text with accompanying workbook, audio and video CD's. Grades are based on classroom participation, homework, projects, tests and quizzes both written and oral.

Materials:

- *Discovering French, Partie IA; Valette and Valette;*

textbook, workbook, and audio and video cd's

- Games, songs, poems and skits to aid retention and increase fluency

\* Additional films from our French library

## Spanish 1A

Michael McCarthy

Our goal is to help students develop the confidence and ability to understand and express themselves in a variety of everyday subjects in Spanish. Basic Spanish grammar, reading, and writing will be formally introduced. Oral proficiency is the primary focus. Students will learn about the Hispanic world, culture, and traditions.

Classes will be conducted primarily in Spanish. Topics will be presented in a variety of ways designed to elicit active student participation. Techniques include communicative exercises, songs, games, skits, writing, and reading. The program will be supported by a text with accompanying workbook, and multi-media ancillaries.

Grades are based on classroom participation, homework, and both written and oral tests and quizzes.

Materials:

- *Realidades 1A* by Pearson, workbook, multimedia ancillaries
- Supplemental material as needed
- Realia

## Geography

Geoff Ashworth

There has been considerable publicity recently about the past performance of U.S. students with regard to geographic literacy. It is our goal in Grade 6 to expose students to a short geography curriculum in order to achieve the following objectives:

- To give students a basic understanding of geography in order to encourage intelligent thinking about current affairs, and to correct misconceptions about foreign lands and peoples.
- To introduce students to the concepts of different cultures, yet realizing that basic human needs are the same worldwide.
- To encourage students to read social studies books other than textbooks.
- To emphasize the development of thinking skills by encouraging the discovery of new information.
- To provide opportunities for students to make rational judgments and decisions.

These objectives are met by a strategy of combining written and oral presentations, games, and class discussions, and working from the textbook *World Explorer*, James B. Kracht, Prentice-Hall. Unfortunately time does not permit us to emphasize every country and culture, but we should reach a variety of peoples and places.

Homework will be given three nights a week, and should take about half an hour per evening. We will be viewing several video tapes taken from the PBS series "The Miracle Planet," a BBC video "Flight of the Condor", and a clip from a Nova series "The Nomads of the Amazon," which contains scenes showing families in their national costume, i.e. naked. If any parent objects to their child seeing any of these films they should let me know as soon as possible.

## Latin

**Eugénie Fawcett**

The primary goal of the Latin Department is to enable students to read Latin prose and to translate it into coherent English. Other goals of the Latin Department are: (1) to promote verbal precision, logical thought, and simple grammatical and etymological analysis, and (2) to foster an understanding of and appreciation for the Greco-Roman influence in Western literature, philosophy, and art.

The Grade 6 Latin curriculum introduces students to the Latin language and Roman culture. *The Phenomenon of Language - Tabula Latina* offers a gentle introduction to basic Latin vocabulary and English and Latin grammar. Every student will be expected to complete a short homework assignment before each class and bring his/her copy of the text/workbook to class. Weekly extra help sessions provide opportunities to get individualized attention.

## Pre-Algebra

**Ned Douglas**

Our goal in teaching Grade 6 Pre-Algebra is to help to create feelings of confidence, enthusiasm, and competence in our students by encouraging them to see patterns, understand processes, and to use skills. Students at this age are usually ready to move away from the world of arithmetic toward the world of Pre-Algebra. We try to demystify math at this level by helping students make the connections between what we study in class and the real world, and to expand their critical thinking.

Our text is *Middle School Mathematics: Course 2*,

published by Prentice Hall. Other resources include calculators, puzzles, games, and work sheets. Students will work on note taking and writing. Topics studied include the vocabulary of Algebra, the decimal system, positive and negative numbers, fractions, equations and inequalities, geometry, ratio, proportion and percent, the coordinate plane, volume and surface area, and probability. Enrichment material is made available to all students to keep their level of interest and enthusiasm high. Assessment of progress includes self-tests, quizzes, section tests, and records of homework completion so that students always receive feedback to let them know where they stand.

## Mathematics

**Geoff Perkins**

Because this is the final year of the regular, non-algebra mathematics sequence for BCD students, it is imperative that they achieve mastery of the four basic operations—addition, subtraction, multiplication and division—as applied to whole numbers, fractions, and decimals. Students work in smaller, developmentally-appropriate groups using mental arithmetic, games, class projects, and word problems that provide a meaningful and pleasant environment for this mastery, thus laying the final foundation for future progress in Algebra and beyond.

The primary source of material will come from the "Accelerated Math" program by Renaissance Learning. We will also supplement our work with various challenges and enrichment activities.

## Music

**Amy Hilliard**

The music program provides an opportunity for all students to become actively involved in four basic areas of musical experience: creating, performing, listening, and history. There is great emphasis on singing and a wide range of folk songs, part-songs, rounds, and canons are used. Music notation and symbols are taught through singing, playing Orff instruments and recorders, and folk dancing. These activities emphasize an awareness of melody, harmony, rhythm, timbre, and form. In addition, much time is spent developing self-confidence and the physical discipline of musical performance, as well as learning to be a good critical listener and a polite, supportive audience member.

## Physical Education

**Gail Heady**

The physical education program in the Middle School becomes more challenging for the students. We expect the children to work harder and spend a greater length of time working on the skills involved in the specific sport we are learning. We offer a variety of lifetime and team sports throughout the three years that the children are in the Middle School. In the fall and spring, we administer a physical fitness test to determine if each child is within the average range of overall fitness. The test covers abdominal strength, upper body strength, flexibility, and aerobic capacity.

Competition does exist, but playing for fun where you can strive for a personal goal and focus on displaying a skill is more important. We emphasize cooperation, respect for each other, showing enthusiasm, and learning to compromise with each other. Good sportsmanship is a valuable tool to possess in and out of the classroom.

Please make sure your child has extra sneakers for Fitzpatrick Hall. We will send a written notification after three times without appropriate footwear.

## Earth Science & Astronomy

**Tim Gore**

The theme for Grade 6 is earth science and astronomy. Students spend the fall exploring the topics of the universe, radiation, galaxies, stars, and the sun. Other major topics for the year include: the solar system, the moon, the Apollo missions, model rocketry, and the earth itself. Students complete numerous small group and individual projects throughout the year, culminating with the Grade 6 Science Fair in the spring. The year ends with a four week robotics unit using Lego Mindstorms. Classroom activities include lectures, notes, research, experiments, hands-on exploration, and study games. Learning by doing is stressed. Depending on the activity, students work individually, in small groups, or as a class. Evaluation is based on successful completion of homework, quizzes, tests, reports/projects, and notebooks, as well as positive engagement in class.

Materials:

- *Science Explorer: Astronomy* (Pearson/Prentice Hall, publisher, 2007)
- *Super Science Magazine* (Scholastic)

## Sports Philosophy

The foundation of the after-school sports program is the belief that every student should have an opportunity to participate in organized team sports at BCD. Among the many things which can be learned from team sports are physical conditioning, sportsmanship, cooperation, social interaction, dependence on others, and the shared-experience factor. This last point is particularly important at a small school and is a major reason for having only one sport each season through the ninth grade. Perhaps the most compelling reason for having team sports is that the peak time for physical skill and coordination development in a person's life is from ten to thirteen years old. Being on a team provides a means for this development through the skill and time requirements. It also provides a reason to want to excel so that the individual may be an asset to the team. Another reason to have team sports at the elementary/middle school level is that this may be the only opportunity for a student to be on a team due to the far more competitive demands of high school and college sports.

At BCD, after-school sports are required for all students in Grades 4 through 9 in the spring and fall. In the winter, there are numerous optional sports offerings for Grades 4-9 as well as the Friday Ski Program which is open to students from Pre-K to Grade 9. The occasional students may have particular interest beyond the scope of what BCD offers (such as tennis, riding, swimming, karate, etc.) may choose an alternate program in the fall and/or spring as long as it meets certain criteria, such as meeting three times per week, provides active as opposed to passive activity, and is supervised by a qualified instructor. The administration at BCD finds it particularly important for students in Grades 7 through 9 to be involved in after-school sports as no physical education classes are scheduled for these grades within the school day.

The most difficult problem with a required competitive sports program is striking a balance between participation and competition. Achieving a perfect blend of the two is virtually impossible even though this is what the program tries to accomplish. The reason is our belief that all children should have an opportunity to play team sports. While an intramural program would be sufficient for some, it does not provide the competitive edge or the format for teaching good sportsmanship for those who have the skills to play on a competitive team. So, BCD tries to create enough teams at varying levels in an effort to meet the needs of all of its students.

The emphasis of the program for Grades 4 and 5 (the Farm Team) is on learning skills, and, consequently,

level. In the Junior Varsity and Varsity programs, students participate on competitive teams that play teams from area schools. In both of these programs, the coaches try to balance participation and playing time. The question of balance between competi-

tion and participation is always a delicate one, but the fact is, everyone is on a team and everyone is involved.

## Theater Philosophy

The mission of BCD's Theater and Film Department is to expose students to the ancient tradition of live theater, developing their appreciation for theatre as a viable and relevant art form as well as introduce them to the film medium. Engaging students early in their educations will create a lifelong interest. Also imperative in the experience of production is the ability of each child to learn the skill of ensemble and respectful community. They will emerge from

the process with a stronger sense of self as well as the commitment of being part of the whole. Students will participate in all aspects of production under professional direction. Rehearsal and production work is structured and mindful while encouraging creative growth and self-expression. Each student will bring his or her unique talent, viewpoint, and desire to the adventure. The hope is that students will proceed equipped with the skills they need to continue pursuing their own development in these disciplines and at the very least, a deeper understanding of the relevance of theater and film as means of communication in our contemporary world.

## Middle School Theater

Students in Grade 4 will participate during the school day in a week-long intensive theater workshop during trips week in the spring.

Students in Grade 5 will participate in a two-week theater workshop, introducing them to ensemble building skills and will conclude with a demonstration in Furey Music Hall.

Students in Grade 6 may participate in a sixth grade production after the soccer season is completed. The material is scripted and chosen according to the specific number and abilities of the participants. The focus is on developing fundamental performance skills, working as an ensemble, and experiencing the thrill of performance.

## Middle School Shop

The Middle School students are introduced to the safe and proper use of basic woodworking hand tools. A strong emphasis is placed on craftsmanship and proper planning, while always working with safety in mind. Projects are chosen based on building fine motor skills and the pleasure of making a toy full of motion that is developmentally appropriate, captures their imagination, and is pleasing and fun. Students gain confidence in their skills and take great pride in their work. There is a simple joy in their self-made toy which continues to bring them pleasure for years to come.

Examples of Project Assignments:

Grade 6: spinning toy (The Whizzer), Race Cars

Grade 5: toy tops, sail boats, propeller toy

Grade 4: clay modeling, candle holder