SPRUCE STREET SCHOOL

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Mid-Level Curriculum Guides

Updated 2022

At Spruce Street School teachers continuously update, modify and create curricula. The following guides will change over time and are designed to give an overview of the scope of experience students will have during their time at Spruce Street School.

All School Ongoing and Annual Learning Experiences

The activities below are consistent across all levels; at times they vary as the student moves through the school. The essential characteristics remain the same regardless of level.

Curricular Experience: All School Meeting
Key goals, activities & assessments: All students and teachers meet in the gym, facilitated by two oldest-level leaders. Classroom representatives share news, and teachers make announcements about ball court games, celebrate birthdays monthly, and highlight special events in the school community, as well as national and cultural holidays. Each meeting ends with a community sing-along or dance.
Time frame: Each Friday from 8:30-9:00

Curricular Experience: Arts Week
Key goals, activities & assessments: Students spend a week immersed in artistic studies and projects, viewed through the lens of an arts-week theme. Moving On students lead teacher-created multi-age groups (ages 5-11) through a schedule of art activities led by teams of Spruce Street School teachers and guest artists. Past Arts Week themes have included: Rhythm, Gargantuan, Urban, Terrain, Contrast, and Scale.
Time frame: Annually (usually the week before or after Spring Break)

Curricular Experience: Birthday Circles
Key goals, activities & assessments: Students celebrate birthdays by sharing thoughtful compliments from the entire classroom community, and enjoying a birthday treat together. Students practice thinking about the strengths and contributions of each member of the community, and receiving compliments gracefully. Whole families are invited to participate in birthday circles at the youngest level. Teachers schedule times to celebrate students whose birthdays fall during vacations.
Time frame: Throughout the year

Curricular Experience: Buddies
Key goals, activities & assessments: Students form strong connections across age levels through regular meetings with individually assigned buddies. Youngest and Mid-Level buddies gather together to read and bolster social skills. Oldest and youngest level buddies work and play together throughout the year, and walk together to Cascade Park on Fridays. Buddies use interviews to get to know each other, which are posted in the stairwells for the school community to see.
Time frame: Varies: weekly walks to Cascade Park, monthly reading, culminating project presentations, annual service learning project

Curricular Experience: Camp
Key goals, activities & assessments: Students learn about themselves and their classmates in new and positive ways in a natural environment. Each youngest level student is invited to bring a family member, and there is special emphasis on community building. The focus at the mid-level is independence. Students participate in activities designed to encourage teamwork and personal growth. Only a few family members attend, giving students room to process the outcome of choices with other trusted adults. The oldest level focus is building scientific knowledge with in-depth studies. They do not take family chaperones. Students are ready to support their peers and practice advocating for themselves.
Time frame: Annually

Curricular Experience: Cascade Park
Key goals, activities & assessments: Each week, students immerse themselves in the community and our changing urban neighborhood as they walk to Cascade Park. The park has a large green space, tall trees, and a play structure. Oldest and youngest level buddies strengthen their connections by walking together. Mid-level students build independence, social skills and flexibility by following a different teacher-generated partner rule each week.
Time frame: Each Friday

Curricular Experience: Cross Country
Key goals, activities & assessments: All students start the school year with a focus on cross country and running. Students work to build their endurance through pacing and practice and have the opportunity to participate in three city-wide meets on the weekend.
Time frame: September and October every year

Curricular Experience: Elders' Tea
Key goals, activities & assessments: On one Friday in May the students host elders for a formal tea party, supported by the families. Before the event, students practice how to be a good host and the manners for a formal party. During the event students perform a song on the marimba for the guests.
Time frame: Each May

Curricular Experience: Electives
Key goals, activities & assessments: Children from each of the core classrooms choose an elective and meet together in mixed-aged groups (ages 5-11) to explore topics taught by teachers. Electives foster learning between students and strengthen the bonds within the student community. Students get to know one another in different ways while working with different teachers. Teachers design Electives based on their talents, interests and curiosity. The first three sessions have a variety of topics while the fourth session is focused on science.
Time frame: Quarterly: six one-hour sessions

Curricular Experience: Estimation Station
Key goals, activities & assessments: Each week teachers design an estimation challenge to enrich and support student math thinking skills. These challenges are posted in the front stairwell for families and students to discover. At All School Meeting students discuss their estimates and strategies as a whole school. A group of students reveal the final count to the community.
Time frame: Weekly

Curricular Experience: Field Trips
Key goals, activities & assessments: Field trips are intentionally and purposely connected to the curricular theme of the year and/or current unit of study. Field trips supplement and expand student understanding of a topic. When possible, teachers connect student groups with community leaders who are experts in their field.
Time frame: Throughout the year

Curricular Experience: Guest Presentations
Key goals, activities & assessments: Students discuss study topics with experts in a broad range of fields, hearing about their work and experiences and asking lively and thoughtful questions.
Time frame: Throughout the year

Curricular Experience: Literature Groups
Key goals, activities & assessments: Students bring home a book each week. Books are chosen for their content (not reading level) and are to be read by or with family members. Students of all reading abilities participate in meaningful small group discussions. Students build literary analysis skills through study of plot, character and theme, practice comprehension skills, and make meaningful connections. There is a purposeful progression of complexity from youngest to oldest level. Books are selected to compliment integrated study topics.
Time frame: 1x per week, 2-4 sessions per year

Curricular Experience: Service Learning
Key goals, activities & assessments: Service-learning projects at Spruce Street School honor the core value of community: "… *it is important for students to feel connected and able to contribute to the larger community around us*." Youngest and oldest level buddies volunteer together in community-enriching projects. Mid-level students visit both the local retirement community, Mirabella, and Immanuel Community Services. In the spring, the Mirabella residents are invited to school plays.
Time frame: Varies: once per year, several times per year, monthly, culminating projects

Curricular Experience: Social Skills Curriculum
Key goals, activities & assessments: The Second Step curriculum is a classroom-based program that promotes the development of students' social-emotional competence. Students learn social-emotional and self-regulation skills. Songs, active listening games, realistic videos and role-play scenarios help students develop independent problem solving and self-regulation skills. The program includes: Skills for Learning, Empathy, Emotion Management, Problem Solving, and Bullying Prevention. Students practice these skills as individuals and as members of a group throughout the day.
Time frame: Formal lesson 1x per week plus ongoing reinforcement throughout the week

Curricular Experience: Theater
Key goals, activities & assessments: The yearly class play provides opportunities for students to practice intensive collaboration, empathy, and performing in front of an audience. The youngest and mid-level play topics are linked to that year's curricular theme; the oldest level performs a Shakespeare play with thematic links to its other studies throughout the year. Class plays provide a very different challenge than classroom projects and work, and allow students to succeed and shine in a new way.
Time frame: 2-3 months in the spring

Curricular Experience: Winter Walk
Key goals, activities & assessments: The entire school spends the afternoon exploring the holiday traditions offered in downtown Seattle. Students travel in triads consisting of a student from each level.
Time frame: Annually in December

Curricular Experience: Class and Community Council
Key goals, activities & assessments: Class and community council meetings offer students opportunities to solve social problems within their community. Each mid-level classroom and the entire mid-level have agendas to which students post ideas and issues to discuss and solve together, respectively. A weekly student facilitator leads the meeting using basic parliamentary procedures, helping with discussions and decisions. Teachers help facilitate and offer suggestions only when necessary.
Time frame: 15 minutes, 2x per week

Curricular Experience: Handwriting
Key goals, activities & assessments: Mid-level students learn cursive using D'Nealian script. Through whole group direct instruction, students first learn lowercase letters followed by uppercase letters. Students practice to increase writing production while using neat, organized, and legible handwriting.
Time frame: 10–15 minutes, 1x per week

Curricular Experience: Investigations
Key goals, activities & assessments: During this self-directed play and project time, students follow their interests and connect with classmates who have similar interests in puzzles, art, building, and/or imaginary play. The goal is for students to learn through play and projects how to be self-directed, develop skills for allocating their own time rather than becoming bored, enter playgroups, and solve problems. They have time to use their curiosity to ask questions and engage others in finding solutions.
Time frame: 20 minutes per day

Curricular Experience: Just Right Reading:
Key goals, activities & assessments: During just right reading time, students develop skills and strategies to increase comprehension, decoding, fluency, and vocabulary while reading fiction and non-fiction texts. Teachers regularly conference with students to reinforce skills and teach new ones that match the student's needs.
Time frame: 4x a week

Curricular Experience: Math Games
Key goals, activities & assessments: Math is a multi-faceted content area where students explore mathematical ideas in various ways. Students play math games to reinforce concepts learned during the math workshop time, and as a bonus, they practice winning, losing, and collaborating gracefully.
Time frame: 1x per week

Curricular Experience: Math Workshop:
Key goals, activities & assessments: During math workshop time, students work through a series of investigations that focus on specific skills and concepts. Students explore and solve problems at their levels while teachers work with students, helping them progress at individual rates.
Time frame: 2x a week

Curricular Experience: Morning Work
Key goals, activities & assessments: Morning work is a short session that jumpstarts the day. Students receive a packet each week, beginning with writing practice on Monday. On the remaining days, students practice previous and current math skills or skills based on other units of study.
Time frame: 4x per week

Curricular Experience: Read Aloud (TUBE/The Ultimate Book Experience)
Key goals, activities & assessments: Teachers read together a book related to the integrated unit of study. They take on the role of characters and narrator, adding voices and sound effects to enrich students' comprehension of the story. Books also reinforce comprehension skills taught during just right reading time.
Time frame: 15–30 minutes several times per week

Curricular Experience: Spelling
Key goals, activities & assessments: Small, skill-based groupings. Instruction centers on phonetic spelling patterns and Greek and Latin roots. Teachers use stories and drama to teach lessons, reinforced by repetition and practice. Activities include word sorts, guided spelling dictation, and worksheets.
Time frame: 3x per week (groups meet 1x per week; lesson is reinforced individually 2 other times)

Curricular Experience: Special Snack
Key goals, activities & assessments: Special Snack is a mid-level tradition where students enjoy a formal snack, sitting at tables with centerpieces. Once a week, one student is the host and provides a snack from home to share with classmates. Students practice manners and conversation during their eating time.
Time frame: 1x per week

Curricular Experience: Toolbox Math
Key goals, activities & assessments: Small, skill-based groupings. Students gain skills and practice strategies to improve mental math and computation skills through number talks, games, and practice sheets.
Time frame: 1x per week

Curricular Experience: Typing
Key goals, activities & assessments: Once students have learned cursive, they transition to learning how to type. During their morning work routine, students work through a touch-typing program integrated into a portable word processor with a full-sized keyboard: a Neo AlphaSmart.
Time frame: 3x per week: 10 minutes

Curricular Experience: Writer's Workshop
Key goals, activities & assessments: During writing workshop time, students focus on idea generation, learn and use conventions and grammar, and build their stamina to produce writing pieces. They learn to write various types of text (letters, expository paragraphs, creative stories) with different purposes such as to persuade, explain, or entertain. They also build skills in the writing process: research, planning, organizing, revising, and editing (with help from teachers and peers), and develop voice and fluency. Each session includes an all-class focus lesson and writing time. Teachers conference with students regularly to set goals.
Time frame: 3x per week

Science Theme: Year 1: physical science
Year 2: earth science

Integrated Unit of Study: Personal and Community Study
Time Frame: September-October
How unit is integrated across the curriculum:

- **Math:** Place value, money
- **Reading:** Read aloud about self and community; introduction to reader's workshop; learning about ourselves as readers and goal setting
- **Writing:** Me poem, note taking and presentation preparation
- **Social Studies:** Classroom norm setting, building a culture of kindness, and risk taking.
- **Diversity Equity and Inclusion (DEI):** Discovering different learning styles and individual strengths and challenges within our classroom community, begin learning about our neighborhood partners, Mirabella Retirement Community and Immanuel Community Services (ICS) Food Bank, initial visits to both Mirabella and ICS
- **Social Skills:** Introduce Second Step lessons, presentation skills, accepting feedback gracefully, and making friends

Culminating Project or Event: In-class presentation about each individual student; overnight trip to Camp Kirby in order to build community and independence; self-portrait and poetry display.

Integrated Unit of Study: Civics Study: year 1: legislative branch; year 2: executive branch
Time Frame: September-December
How unit is integrated across the curriculum:

- **Math:** Addition, subtraction, 2-D geometry
- **Reading:** Read about the three branches of government, learn patriotic songs; literature circle: picture books and a short chapter book; literature circle comprehension roles: asking open-ended questions, vocabulary development, making connections, character analysis; TUBE teacher read aloud
- **Writing:** Introduce writer's workshop, writing process, parts of speech, sentence and paragraph structure; complete one or more non-fiction paragraphs
- **Social Studies:** Lessons on three branches of government with focus on one particular branch. Interview Mirabella residents about their civics participation
- **DEI:** Explore democracy and citizenship, voting rights, equity in government, and Civil Rights; learn about community members who visit ICS and live at Mirabella
- **Social Skills:** Making a mid-level constitution, second step lessons (add the specific lessons)
- Culminating Project or Event: Legislative portfolio expo (year 1), living museum (year 2)

Integrated Unit of Study: Ancient Study
Time Frame: January-April
How unit is integrated across the curriculum:

- **Math:** Time, multiplication, area, fractions
- **Reading:** Non-fiction reading skills such as determining important information, identifying non-fiction features and finding the main idea; TUBE teacher read aloud
- **Writing:** Persuasive letter writing, non-fiction paragraph writing skills, research skills
- **Science:** Topics as related to ancient study
- **Social Studies:** Mapping, history, ancient governmental structures, study of a different way of life, share research with residents at Mirabella
- **Social Skills:** How to work in a small research group
- **DEI:** Stratification of ancient cultures

Culminating Project or Event: Ancient study research conference

Integrated Unit of Study: **Theater: based on ancient culture study**
Time Frame: March-April
How unit is integrated across the curriculum:

- **Math:** Fractions
- **Reading:** Fluency, script reading, decoding, memorization, comprehension and re-telling, character analysis, read myths from ancient culture
- **Writing:** Poetry, persuasive letters, and writing about characters in play to build understanding
- **Social Studies:** Mythology of ancient culture, hosting a group of elders from Mirabella. Continue volunteering at ICS
- **Social Skills:** Managing anxiety/stage fright, teamwork, performance skills, and Second Step lessons (add the specific lessons)
- **DEI:** Honoring diversity of skills/intelligence, casting discussions

Culminating Project or Event: All-school and evening performances

Integrated Unit of Study: **Science: year 1: physical science, year 2: earth science**
Time Frame: April-June
How unit is integrated across the curriculum:

- **Math:** Division and measurement
- **Science:** Simple machines, Rube Goldberg machines, invention design process (year 1), geology or weather (year 2)
- **Reading:** Non-fiction reading; summarizing a fiction story; book reviews; read aloud; literature circles
- **Writing:** Creative writing unit; story structure; adding dialogue, description, and detail; persuasive writing through advertisements for inventions
- **Social Studies:** Learning how to acquire a patent
- **Social Skills:** Presentation skills, team work and collaborative learning

Culminating Project or Event: Design, create and present an invention idea to their peers and teachers to acquire a patent (year 1); design, create and present an earth science project related to earth science (year 2)

The youngest level attends two 30-minute art classes each week. The mid-level and oldest level attend art class for one 45-minute session each week. Using the arts to form a rich and varied learning environment for students is part of Spruce Street School's mission and values. The goal of the visual arts program is for students to learn how to express and share their ideas through visual art. Integrating art with the classroom curriculum is the focus of many projects. Students also practice giving and receiving positive feedback.

Youngest level

Students observe teacher led demonstrations to learn techniques for using art medium. Teaching students to properly use and care for all materials is part of the curriculum. Students share the art studio to develop creativity, practice learned techniques, and build an understanding of the fundamental elements of art: line, shape, color, and composition.

Mid-level

Students observe teacher led demonstrations to learn techniques for using art medium. Teaching students to become self-reliant in working with materials is part of the art curriculum at this level. The use of a variety of media serves in building students' understanding of the fundamental elements of art: line, shape, color, and composition.

Oldest level

Students observe teacher led demonstrations to learn techniques for using art medium. Students use a variety of media to build understanding of the elements of art: line, shape, color, and composition. Encouraging students to be self-reliant in working with materials and taking creative risks is part of the art curriculum at this level. Students focus on independent projects.

Music Curriculum Guide

The purpose of the music program is to expose each student to the basic elements of music, and to give them experience performing in an ensemble. Students learn through singing, moving, listening, playing percussion instruments (marimbas, drums, and other hand-held instruments), and a variety of enrichment activities. The curriculum is drawn from the rich cultures of Africa. The objective is to teach polyphonic and polyrhythmic relationships in music, encouraging students to work together in an ensemble and develop individual skills. Students are given an opportunity to demonstrate these skills through school-wide and community performances. Each class attends music class twice each week.

Youngest level

In the youngest level, the goal is for students to gain an orientation to the fundamentals of music by learning to understand notes and tones while developing a concept of rhythm and time. Further, students begin to develop an overall sense of how to work cohesively with their peers. Students reach these goals by participating in various movement activities, singing songs, playing games, and dancing, in addition to receiving individual instruction on marimbas, drums and other percussive instruments. As students begin to experiment with marimba playing, they work with song sets that offer an introduction to the instrument.

Mid-level

In the mid-level, the goal is for students to build their proficiency in playing the marimbas as they begin to collect a repertoire of songs to help them advance. Students also begin to experiment with technique on both the marimba and the drums while continuing their exploration of rhythm and melody. Teaching continues to include individual instruction as well as a plethora of exercises to help students develop technique. Students practice musical arrangements that are sung and played to assist them in learning articulation, timing, speed, and timbre.

Oldest level

In the oldest level, the goal is for students to have a strong foundation in musical principles upon leaving the school, with both exposure to and experience with a number of different instruments, and an emphasis on the value of performance and musicianship. Students have several opportunities to share their music with the community at large. At this level, students have internalized many of the techniques taught and can begin to naturally utilize them in their playing. Also, many new, more sophisticated techniques are taught at this level, allowing students to continue to advance as musicians with a specialty.

Each class attends PE twice each week for 30-45 minutes per session. The goal of the physical education program is to help students develop the skill, knowledge and attitude necessary for active, healthy living. During class students learn, develop and practice physical skills, engage in vigorous aerobic exercise, and stretch their major muscle groups.

Youngest level

Youngest level students start the school year with a focus on cross country and endurance running. Students work to build their endurance through pacing and practice, and have the opportunity to participate in three city-wide meets as a part of this focus. After completing the cross-country program, students focus on the routines and expectations for PE class. They practice gross motor skills, spatial awareness, and coordination while participating in vigorous exercise. At this level, students focus their skill development on throwing, catching, and hand-eye coordination. They also practice sportsmanship and appreciation of healthy competition between peers.

Mid-level

Mid-level students start the school year with a focus on cross country and endurance running. Students work to build their endurance through pacing and practice. They identify their strengths and challenges as runners in order to set goals. Students have the opportunity to participate in three city-wide meets. After completing the cross-country program, students focus on applying gross motor skills, spatial awareness and coordination to different games. They focus on sportsmanship, including what constitutes being a team player and how to accept defeat gracefully. Students use strategy and cooperation to increase their sophistication and skills with the games. Mid-level students focus their skill development on throwing, catching, running and dodging.

Oldest level

Oldest level students start the school year with a focus on cross country and endurance running. They utilize Cascade Park to further their cross-country running skills. Students set individual goals for distance and track their progress. Students have the opportunity to participate in three city-wide meets as a part of this focus. After completing the cross-country program, students apply their knowledge of gross motor skills, spatial awareness and coordination to different games. They use strategy, tactical abilities and cooperation to increase their sophistication and skill with the games. They learn how to how to play different roles on a team, how to work together, and how to develop specific skills such as throwing, kicking, passing, and dodging. Students also practice sportsmanship and appreciation of healthy competition between peers. Student leadership expectations emphasize accountability, honesty, initiative, and integrity.

Each class receives three 30-minute Spanish sessions each week. The goal of the Spanish program is to give students the opportunity to listen to and speak Spanish in an encouraging environment that will instill in them a desire to learn a second language. Maintaining a Spanish dialogue in the classroom gives children an opportunity to practice learned vocabulary and new phrases. Students enjoy learning Spanish through the music, art, and food of Spanish speaking cultures. Remembering to say "*gracias*", "*por favor"*, and "*de nada*" is an important part of each day. All students participate in a *Día de los Muertos* celebration through creating a shared *ofrenda* for the school. Topics of study change each month. Topics include school and classroom, family, parts of the body, clothing, *mi casa*, and food.

Youngest level

Students in the youngest level learn basic Spanish beginning with naming colors, numbers, the alphabet, and the calendar. Establishing a daily routine through songs, games, and visual cues is an important part of the curriculum at this level.

Mid-level

Students in the mid-level establish a daily routine through songs, games, and visual cues. Students practice basic Spanish and develop their comprehension of the language by learning new vocabulary and phrases. Students work on their reading and writing skills by copying material and working in their notebooks.

Oldest level

Students in the oldest level establish a daily routine through songs, games, and visual cues. Students practice reading and writing words and simple sentences at this level. Students build their Spanish speaking skills and comprehension of the language by working to maintain a Spanish dialogue in class.