SPRUCE STREET SCHOOL

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Oldest 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: Community Meeting
Key goals, activities & assessments: Community meetings are a classroom laboratory in democracy and problem solving. Students take turns leading the meeting, following a student-set agenda and applying problem-solving procedures from Second Step with teacher guidance and support when necessary.
Time frame: 1x per week: 30 minutes

Curricular Experience: Computation Strategy Lab
Key goals, activities & assessments: Leveled, small group instruction in computation skills and strategies, supporting students in developing efficient and accurate computation skills grounded in a firm and flexible understanding of place value, number sense and algebraic relationships.
Time frame: 1 30-minute focused lesson, daily practice and reinforcement during Morning Skill Practice time.

Curricular Experience: Handwriting and Keyboard Skills
Key goals, activities & assessments: All students practice keyboarding through a touch-typing program. Students who need cursive practice also complete cursive packets. The goal is for students to become fluent in at least one method of writing and be able to choose which method to use for to express their ideas.
Time frame: 5-10 minutes per day during Morning Skill Practice

Curricular Experience: Health and Anatomy
Key goals, activities & assessments: Life sciences are taught through *The Great Body Shop* curriculum and accompanying materials on human anatomy and physiology. The goal is for students to understand how their bodies work, become comfortable with personal changes that are happening to them and their peers, and increase personal responsibility for taking care of themselves.
Time frame: 1x per week: 30 minutes

Curricular Experience: Just Right Reading
Key goals, activities & assessments: Students work with teachers to make thoughtful reading choices that reflect their interests, reading level, and goals. Independent reading develops fluency, comprehension and stamina, and expands students' experience with different genres. Students practice comprehension strategies and skills as a group and during independent reading, using nonfiction texts related to integrated studies, read aloud text and their independent book choice as models.
Time frame: Daily, 15-45 minutes

Curricular Experience: Leadership Development
Key goals, activities & assessments: Students build their leadership skills with a broad range of activities and responsibilities, including facilitating all school meetings, hosting weekly pizza lunches, serving on the school's safety or service patrol, and guiding younger buddies on weekly walks to Cascade Park.
Time frame: Ongoing

Curricular Experience: Math Games
Key goals, activities & assessments: Students play math games regularly to reinforce and extend concepts taught during math workshop in a playful and social way. Games provide varied ways to explore mathematical ideas, hone strategic reasoning, reinforce computation skills, and learn collaboratively. Students also practice winning, losing and disagreeing respectfully and gracefully in this time.
Time frame: 1-3x per week

Curricular Experience: Math Workshop
Key goals, activities & assessments: Students build mathematical skills and concepts with an emphasis on problem solving. Math workshop is organized around a unifying topic (ratio and proportion, polygons, fractions and decimals, etc.) within which students solve problems at a broad range of difficulty levels based on their individual strengths and needs.
Time frame: 4x per week: 45-minute workshop sessions

Curricular Experience: Opera
Key goals, activities & assessments: Students study an opera in class, focusing on the work's social and historical context and aspects of opera as an art form, and have the option of attending an evening dress rehearsal at Seattle Opera, accompanied by teachers and returning alumni.
Time frame: 1-2x per year

Curricular Experience: Read Aloud and Audiobooks
Key goals, activities & assessments: Students listen to books related to integrated study topics and social themes. These books reinforce and extend learning from Writing and Reader's Workshop, connect to Literature Group discussions, and build community through shared enjoyment of a story.
Time frame: Several times per week: 15-30 minutes

Curricular Experience: Safety and Service Patrols
Key goals, activities & assessments: Oldest level students serve on either the school's Safety Patrol or its Service Patrol. Safety Patrol members take on the responsibility of helping school and neighborhood community members navigate through the busy intersection every morning and afternoon. Service Patrol members complete a broad range of projects around the school.
Time frame: Intensive training sessions in September, daily Safety Patrol shifts, and monthly meetings.

Curricular Experience: Skill Practice
Key goals, activities & assessments: Independent, leveled work packets in math and language. This allows students to reinforce skills and information not directly related to a current unit of study.
Time frame: 3x per week: 15 minutes

Curricular Experience: Word Study
Key goals, activities & assessments: Leveled, small group instruction in spelling rules, patterns and derivations. 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. The goal is for students to increase automaticity with patterns and focus on writing genres.
Time frame: 2x per week: 30 minutes

Curricular Experience: Writing Workshop
Key goals, activities & assessments: Writers build knowledge and skills for different writing genres, and complete projects of varied scopes, in a variety of genres, related to integrated studies. Persuasive essays, poetry, fictional stories, letters, and other compositions build fluency and organizational skills. Each session includes an all-class focus lesson and writing time. Teachers conference with students regularly to set differentiated and individualized goals.
Time frame: 2-4x per week: 45-minute workshop sessions, with additional work time built into the schedule depending on the stage of writing projects

Science Themes: Life science (health and anatomy), physical science

Integrated Unit of Study: Science-based integrated study
Time Frame: Yearlong: health and anatomy
September-October: experiential science tied to camp
How unit is integrated across the curriculum:

- **Math:** Scale drawing, ratio and proportion, mapping and modeling, angles and polygons, and similarity, ratio and proportion
- **Reading:** Non-fiction articles and primary sources
- **Science:** Principles of design and redesign, taking results into account in subsequent iterations (year 1); measurements; mass, volume and density; forces and pressures, natural and human-created environmental change.
- **Social Skills:** Forming connections within the class and oldest level communities, collaborative inquiry, presentation skills, accepting feedback, collaborative project development
- **Social Studies:** Historical context, based on topic
- **Writing:** Short expository and persuasive compositions
- **Diversity, Equity and Inclusion:** Diverse historical and contemporary perspectives on rivers, dams, boats, and bodies of water

Culminating Project or Event: Camp, group project and engineering experiments, informal health and anatomy presentations

Integrated Unit of Study: Social studies based integrated study
Year 1: History Study: a study of the natural and human history of Seattle and Washington State, focused on immigration and WWII-era forced removal and incarceration.
Year 2: Courts, Trials and Justice: United States history and civics through a lens of the judicial system and Bill of Rights.
Time Frame: October-December
How unit is integrated across the curriculum:

- **Math:** Fair shares and fractions, statistics and graphing based on study topic, factors, multiples and properties of numbers and mystery number puzzles (year 2)
- **Reading:** Nonfiction reading: historical documents and first-person accounts; fiction reading: historical fiction (year 1) and mystery (year 2)
- **Science:** Density, ratio and proportion, bridge and boat making, model building, testing and revising (year 1); experimental proof and control of variables, balance (year 2)
- **Social Skills:** Developing and reinforcing collaboration strategies
- **Social Studies:** Geography, economy and government of early Seattle (year 1); civics, early US history, Bill of Rights, judicial system and trial procedure (year 2)
- **Writing:** Herald articles (year 1); persuasive writing, construction of legal arguments (year 2)
- **Diversity, Equity and Inclusion:** Justice, equity and discrimination in immigration (year 1) and the judicial system (year 2)

Culminating Project or Event: Persuasive letters based on contemporary immigration topics (year 1), mock trial (year 2)

Integrated Unit of Study: Science-based integrated study
Year 1: Bridges and Engineering
Year 2: Chemistry
Time Frame: January-February
How unit is integrated across the curriculum:

- **Math:** Plane geometry
- **Reading:** Non-fiction articles and primary sources
- **Science:** Forces, principles of design and redesign, taking results into account in subsequent iterations (year 1); measurements, data and recording, control of variables (year 2)

- **Social Skills:** Collaborative design and exploration, articulation and publication of results and conclusions.
- **Social Studies:** Historical and cultural contexts.
- **Writing:** Short expository and persuasive compositions
- **Diversity, Equity and Inclusion:** Diverse historical and contemporary perspectives on bridges (year 1); study of diverse scientists and scientific contributions and impacts (year 2)

Culminating Project or Event: Group engineering (year 1) and experimentation (year 2) projects.

Integrated Unit of Study: Student led conferences

Time Frame: February-March

How unit is integrated across the curriculum:

- **Math:** Student reflections and self-evaluations based on computation and problem-solving, math games selected to show growth
- **Reading:** Passage selection, reading aloud with expression and intonation
- **Social Skills:** Reflecting on personal and academic strengths and challenges, setting goals, assessing using math skills checklist and reading and writing continua
- **Writing:** Write reflections and goals
- **Diversity, Equity and Inclusion:** Students focus on their own strengths and challenges, advocating for their needs and celebrating their successes. Teachers and students collaborate to individualize the experience as appropriate

Culminating Project or Event: Student led conference

Integrated Unit of Study: Theater and Stories

Time Frame: March-May

How unit is integrated across the curriculum:

- **Math and Science:** Set and prop design, story arc graphs.
- **Reading:** Deciphering new vocabulary, character analysis, reading about the time period to build context, re-reading for understanding, paraphrasing
- **Social Skills:** Perspective-taking, collaboration, public presentation, write for a younger audience
- **Social Studies:** Historical study of each play's social context.
- **Writing:** Writing a story and sharing with younger buddy
- **Diversity, Equity and Inclusion:** Study of equity, social hierarchy and power dynamics within each play, intentional casting and role creation to honor each student's strengths, challenges and contributions

Culminating Project or Event: Picture book, and all-school and evening theater performances

Integrated Unit of Study: Community Connections

Time Frame: May-June

How unit is integrated across the curriculum:

- **Math:** Angles and navigation in the neighborhood, maps and scale, community connections algebraic challenges
- **Reading:** Feature articles, nonfiction reading for research
- **Social Studies and Social Skills:** Researching professions and endeavors, interviewing members of the community about their work.
- **Writing:** Feature article format, note taking
- **Diversity, Equity and Inclusion:** Honoring different roles and contributions in the community

Culminating Project or Event: Published feature article in *The Community Connector*

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.