First and Second Grade Curriculum Guide 2008-2009

1st and 2nd Grade Language Arts

The first and second grade classroom encourages a culture of appreciative readers and confident writers. The goals of the program include building reading and writing skills, communicating clearly, and listening well. Children practice reading and writing daily through targeted activities, games, and reading and writing activities related to units of study, particularly science and social studies. Thus, written language is incorporated across the curriculum and is relevant to children's studies and interests. To accommodate the range of abilities within the class, the teacher differentiates instruction with various strategies, including self-directed and "choice" work, buddy reading, and individualized lessons and work plans.

Reading instruction includes a blend of the best of developmentally appropriate approaches for literacy. New readers build on their foundation in sound-symbol correspondence and gain familiarity with new phonograms while more experienced readers increase their awareness of more complex word patterns and practice strategies for reading longer words with various syllable types and common prefixes and suffixes. The teacher encourages children to decode new words using their phonetic skills, but young readers also use prediction, context and pictorial clues to help them derive meaning from texts. All apply and practice new skills in a supportive environment with a high level of individual attention. As soon as they are ready, children begin to read the easy classics of young children's literature, including works by such well-loved authors as Else Homelund Minarik, Dr. Suess, P. D. Eastman, Esther Averill, and Arnold Lobel. Building on their success with these introductory texts featuring strong rhythm, rhyme, predictability, and repetition, they then progress to easy chapter books, while more advanced readers enjoy longer books by authors such as Beverly Cleary, James Howe, Roald Dahl, Frank Baum, and Dick King-Smith.

In addition to reading daily in class and at home, children in the first and second grades sustain listening and respond in guided discussions to works of literature. Reading selections include novels such as *The Mouse and the Motorcycle*, *Charlotte's Web*, and *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*; poetry by such authors as Shel Silverstein, Robert Louis Stevenson, Edward Lear, and Lewis Carroll, short stories, folktales, myths and non-fiction selections. Using meaningful books and literature, the teacher emphasizes comprehension strategies such as asking thoughtful questions, making predictions, gathering main ideas from the text, mental imaging, and employing schemata to help children enjoy and understand literature.

Writing instruction includes instruction in handwriting, and students develop familiarity with the upper and lower cases of the cursive alphabet through practice and attention to writing habits for all written work in the classroom. Cursive writing avoids the possibility of reversals and provides the most distinctive letter formations, which are easier to learn than the confusing "stick and ball" formations of manuscript writing. Using teacher made

materials, workbooks and whiteboards children practice handwriting skills first in isolation, then in application to their written work.

Writing projects include book summaries, poetry, journal writing, and expository writing. Students generate writing topics through the use of brainstorming, webbing, mapping, KWL charts, and group discussions. Students learn to write for a variety of audiences and purposes; from creative writing to informative pieces, students understand the importance of crafting clear, coherent, and creative work. An introduction to the 6+1 writing traits enhances student understanding of the various components of effective writing and gives students both a greater sense of control over the quality of their work and a shared vocabulary for discussing writing. The process of drafting, revising, editing, and publishing is taught, and students learn to use dictionaries and thesauruses to help achieve this goal.

Spelling practice follows a systematic progression similar to that used in learning to decode words and includes opportunities to apply phonetic principles, learn about word families and patterns, and master grade-level sight words. Children use the Montessori grammar symbols and grammar boxes to understand the functions of the nine parts of speech and to diagram and construct simple sentences. Vocabulary practice is integrated into reading, discussions, and unit studies. As with other skill work, the teacher individualizes the student's learning program for spelling, handwriting, grammar, and vocabulary development to provide challenge or extra practice where needed.

Materials: *Montessori phonics and grammar materials, Harcourt Brace Big Books, Explode the Code, High Frequency Words, Spellwell, Phonics Practice Readers, selected novels, short stories, nonfiction selections, and poetry.*

1st and 2nd Grade Social Studies—The Universe

The first and second grade social studies curriculum paints a broad picture of the world and mankind's place in it and provides a framework within which students may sort and classify new information. Because of its wide perspective and interdisciplinary nature, the curriculum is described as the Universe Curriculum and includes an examination of the physical environment on Earth and cultural geography as bases for studying human culture. The journey through time and space has three main, sequential branches: the formation of the world, the emergence of life on earth, and the coming of humans. This exploration is designed to help students realize that everything in the universe is interrelated and exists in a fragile balance. The curriculum further emphasizes the shared needs of humanity and the various adaptations humans have made to diverse environments. A central question is: What is culture? Children especially enjoy the opportunity to create their own civilization within the context of a specific environment that they also design and present in a written and illustrated format.

The first and second grade study begins with creation myths, stories and explanations of events from the Big Bang to the formation of the Earth. Next, the curriculum examines the Earth and its composition. Science activities using the Delta Science Modules will

support students' understanding of the physical composition of the Earth. During the "A" year we use a Delta module to explore properties of air, while the "B" year unit is "Sink or Float." Further Montessori-based investigations include the Earth's interior, volcanoes, day and night and a study of the seasons. Ensuing study includes lessons designed to familiarize students with the hemispheres, continents and oceans, cardinal directions, landscape features, and climate zones, and includes the use of puzzle maps, land and water forms, and timelines of the Earth and the evolution of life.

Over the course of two years students also focus on the seven continents. "A" year continents (school years starting in a year that is an odd number) are Africa, North America, South America and Antarctica, while "B" year continents are Asia, Australia and Europe. Students learn about the physical geography, plants, and animals of each continent as well as the fundamental needs of humans and the cultural expressions of native people in a variety of geographic areas. Studies in the "A" year include a look at ancient Egypt, and conduct an in-depth unit on the Ancestral Puebloan culture that culminates with an experiential learning trip. In the "B" Year students examine the adaptations of prehistoric man and the ancient cultures of Mesopotamia. Age-appropriate activities, reading and writing exercises accompany each topic while opportunities for child-based research empower students to question, think critically, observe and make their own conclusions.

As we celebrate each continent, we will discuss our own heritages. Each year also includes an exploration of our local history and emergent discussions of local and global current events. A unit on Telluride history and the history of mining in the region allows students to take advantage of a number of regional resources, including the Telluride Historical Museum and to enjoy short, experiential learning trips into the local hills to examine artifacts and explore how mining shaped our environment. Local studies encourage children to discover their place in the universe, while instilling a moral responsibility to maintain and improve our world. As always, respect for all things, both living and not, is emphasized. Concepts such as evolution, the cyclic pattern of most things, interdependence in nature and the individual's role are discovered as students gain a picture of the history as well as the geography of the universe.

The Wilkinson Public Library is used for research to augment class lessons. Experiential learning trips, such as a visit to the archaeology-rich Kelly Place near Cortez, CO in the A year, and a trip to Fruita to explore paleontological resources in the B year, also offer invaluable hands-on exposure and bring classroom lessons to life. At Kelly Place, students make Native American pottery using ancient techniques, learn to recognize artifacts and even throw Ancestral Puebloan spears, called atlatls. In Fruita, students see dinosaur fossils intact in their geologic setting and work with paleontologists from the Museum of Western Colorado. Community service is also an integral element of social studies, and the students contribute to school-sponsored community service projects whenever possible.

Materials: *Montessori universe materials, Delta Science Modules, Multicultural folktales, history texts, and current event resources.*

1st and 2nd Grade Mathematics

The child entering the first grade from the Montessori at Mountain School already has a rich background in mathematics, and new students also benefit from a curriculum that emphasizes hands-on approaches to new concepts, daily practice of basic math facts, and problem-solving skills. First and second grade students build their understanding of quantity, the decimal system, numeric operations, and geometric and mathematical principles with the Montessori materials, which provide concrete experiences that continue to be essential to their learning. As their understanding deepens, students begin work with more and more abstract representations of mathematical concepts, eventually moving towards paper and pencil exercises with the *Primary Mathematics* texts developed by Singapore Math.

The *Primary Mathematics* series of elementary texts and workbooks is a part of a system of learning and independent practice that go hand-in-hand. Children progress through concrete, pictorial, and abstract representations of mathematical ideas as their understanding deepens, and they develop the ability to think abstractly and work more exclusively with symbols. This progression promotes clear thinking, effective communication of mathematical ideas, and adept problem solving, and helps develop the foundation pupils need for more advanced mathematics. Students often work with their classmates to share and solidify their understanding, and the teacher in the multi-age classroom differentiates instruction through a number of strategies, including individualized lesson plans, individual and small group instruction, peer-mentoring, self-directed activities and "choice" work. Math is integrated across the entire curriculum where practical to instill an appreciation for the usefulness of mathematical application in everyday situations.

The mathematics curriculum for second grade is designed to build upon skills learned in first grade. A hands-on approach is still used to help students understand and apply new mathematical concepts and reinforce learned material. There is continued emphasis on number sense and place value as this helps students' understanding of virtually every mathematical concept they will encounter in the future. In addition, the class covers the following skills, concepts, and operations: addition with carrying to five (or more) digits; subtraction with borrowing to five (or more) digits; estimation; word problems (with an emphasis on employing a variety of strategies to approach the problem); measurement; multiplication; division; operations with money; working with time; collecting and representing data; simple graphing; classification; geometry; and fractions.

Materials*: Montessori math materials; Primary Mathematics texts and workbooks by Singapore Math*

1st and 2nd Grade Life Science– The Living World

The life science curriculum for the first and second grade examines the living world. The six to eight year old child is curious, constantly questioning, seeking answers and above

all looking for a chance to test his or her own reasoning. Children use the information they learn in the interdisciplinary Living World curriculum to provide a basis for the organization of their experiences in the outside world. By practicing observation and classification, students gain the ability to categorize new information in their growing understanding. Hands-on learning is of paramount importance; through experiments and observations, children gain real experience with scientific methodology. Science work also incorporates math, reading, writing, and art activities. Resources include hands-on materials drawn from the Montessori tradition, Delta Science Modules, and library materials. Children are also provided opportunities to incorporate individual interests into their early research experiences.

The living world curriculum begins with introductory lessons such as "living versus non-living" and "organic versus inorganic". Once this general framework is established, the student begins classifying things within his or her understanding of the components of the *living* world. Tactile activities involve real specimens whenever possible. Typically, children begin with the study of familiar animals. By categorizing them into chordates or non-chordates, and then in a future lesson identifying the five main groups of chordates, they gain experience with classification, moving from the familiar to the unknown. Students keep a science journal in which they collect charts, drawings, collages, and research that they have done over the course of their studies.

Through stories and games that engage their imaginations, students learn the names of various animals and plants and identify them by their characteristics. Students further investigate the various needs of animals and how they are satisfied. Research is integrated with mythology and cultural legends as students answer questions such as: How did this animal come to be? Why do they only live in this particular climatic region? How do they provide for their offspring? The Living World studies are thus integrated into the Universe Curriculum through research on the continents and the living things that have adapted to them. A unit in the "B" year tying together the timeline of life on earth with the study of life forms focuses on dinosaurs. The study culminates in an exciting experiential learning trip to learn about paleontology and dinosaur resources on the Western Slope. The "A" year unit is a Delta Science investigation entitled "Using your Senses", an introductory look at the human body, which is supplemented by Montessori materials on the body's systems. Finally, linking both the plant and animal studies and the Universe and Living World curricula, the study of ecology helps students to understand the interconnectedness of the living things that compose our world and the special responsibilities of humans on our planet.

Materials*: Montessori living world curriculum, Delta Science Modules, Project Wild Activities, miscellaneous science activity books*

1st and 2nd Grade Spanish

First and second graders are at a very receptive age to learn Spanish and increase their comfort using a foreign language. Central components in building a solid foundation of Spanish language skills include daily exposure to Spanish, repetition of new vocabulary, and regular practice. To build confidence and a solid foundation of language skills, Spanish is used daily in the classroom as students make basic requests and the classroom teacher gives simple directions in Spanish. In twice weekly lessons from a Spanish language specialist, students learn basic conversational Spanish, greetings and goodbyes, simple sentences expressing moods and feelings, likes and dislikes, classroom vocabulary, numbers, colors, food, family, time, dates and seasons. Vocabulary will be presented using teacher made materials and activities, Spanish songs, Total Physical Response interactive games, and *In Other Words* language program designed by Montessori instructor Alice Renton. Additionally, students study Spanish and Latin American cultures.

Resources used to assist in Spanish language learning include a variety of Spanish games, including *Bingo, Twister, Simón dice, Tic Tac Toe,* Children's books in Spanish, Spanish flashcards, BBC language course *Muzzy* level 1, *In Other Words* materials and language progression.

1st and 2nd Grade Visual Art

Lower School art offers a creative, academically based program that encourages students to become aware of their personal growth and ability as artistic individuals. Art projects support both curricular content from the humanities and technical and conceptual skills. Throughout their early developmental stages, students have numerous opportunities to work with a variety of media. Exploring, experimenting, and simply playing are all essential factors in the early stages of creative development. Skill development is based in learning and practicing the elements and principles of art and design. Working with line leading to shape and form, continuing on with value, texture and color theory, the students learn to take risks with all aspects of composition. Following specific directions and possibly working outside their comfort zones, they explore and express their own ability.

1st and 2nd Grade Music

First and second graders experience both structured and semi-structured musical learning environments. Through learning to sing and perform traditional and popular songs, students experience the joy of accomplishing musical tasks, learn to recognize pitch and blend voices musically. Through experimentation and exploration, students discover the joy of expressing themselves musically. Guitars, drums, keyboards, singing, writing songs, and playing musical games foster this expression. Creating a band setting and allowing the students to imagine and form their own band affords the chance for social interplay and practical application of newly learned skills. Performance opportunities complete the creative process and add excitement to the program. This early musical experience is a step toward a lifelong involvement with music.

Physical Education

The goal of the first and second grade physical education program is to provide students with physically enhancing and rewarding experiences outdoors that contribute to a lifetime of healthy and active endeavors. Students practice locomotor movement, spatial awareness, and rhythm with an emphasis on developing work ethic and sportsmanship. First and second graders work on coordination and body awareness through throwing, catching, kicking, and running activities. Students learn the skills and concepts of heart rate monitoring, yoga, stretching, breathing, warm-up and cool down, and endurance to enhance their athleticism and encourage the synthesis of mind and body. Classes take place on the Lawson Hill field throughout the school year and in classrooms when weather dictates. Like all disciplines at Telluride Mountain School, students are expected to uphold the core values of responsibility, respect, integrity, and love of learning.