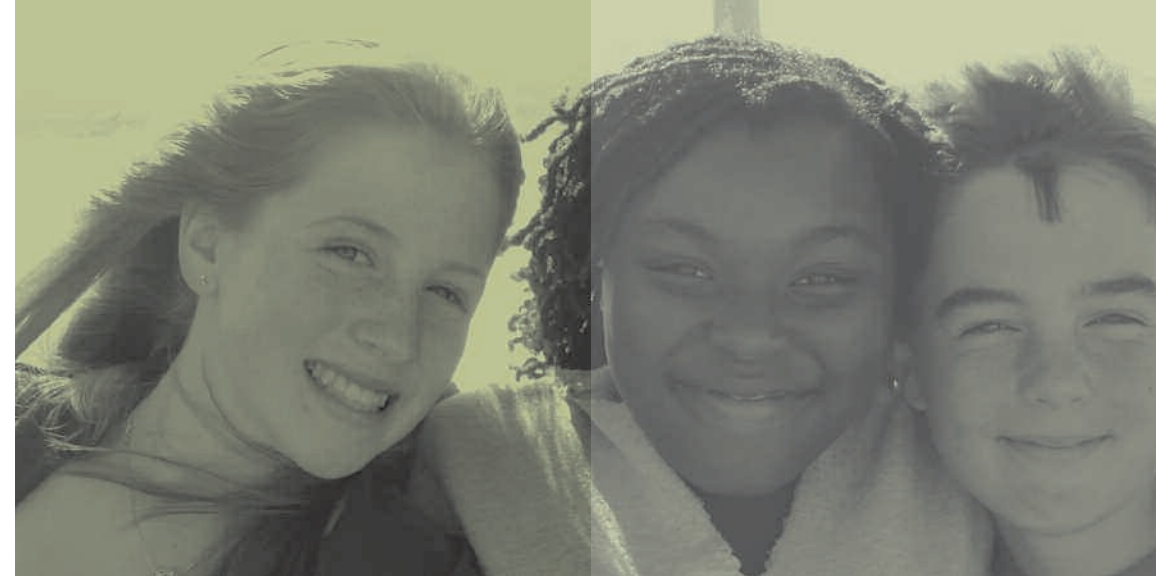




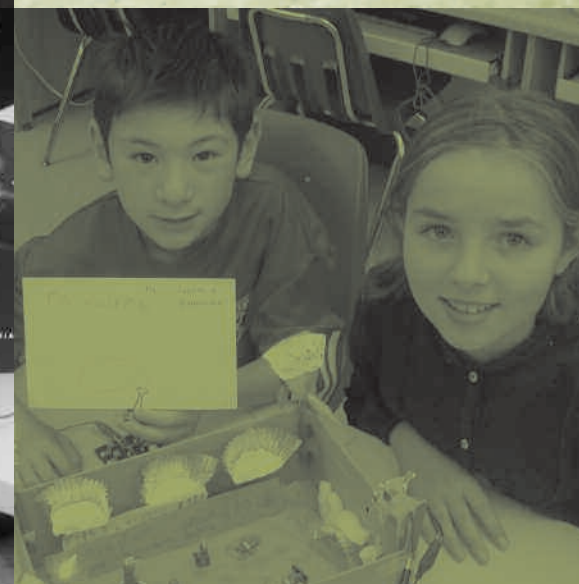
PreSiDio HiLL SCHOOl



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Lower School Curriculum

<i>Kindergarten</i>	<i>First Grade</i>	<i>Second Grade</i>	<i>Third Grade</i>	<i>Fourth Grade</i>	<i>Fifth Grade</i>
<p>Language Arts</p> <p>We emphasize exposure to reading and writing strategies that include sound/letter recognition, decoding words, recognizing sight words, story comprehension, rhyming, phonemic awareness, and using phonetic “best guess” spelling. Fiction and non-fiction books are read to students daily, and time is set aside for students to try reading on their own.</p>	<p>Students learn to read and become fluent in their reading. They write daily, practicing “best guess” spelling as well as conventional spelling of high-frequency words. We use a workshop approach to teach reading and writing, which includes mini-lessons, small group work, sharing, and individual time with the teacher.</p>	<p>We emphasize fluency with particular focus on decoding multisyllabic words. Students read independently as well as in pairs and in groups to work on comprehension. Spelling tests help the children transition from “best guess” to conventional spelling, and writing workshops introduce fiction and non-fiction stories, poetry, science logs, journals, reading comprehension questions, and pen pals.</p>	<p>Comprehension is the major focus; students are taught to recognize personal connections to the text, to develop and ask questions, to create mental images, and to identify what is important in a text. A formal introduction to the editing process and to cursive handwriting deepens students’ understanding of written expressions.</p>	<p>Students learn to recognize particular social and cultural features of a text to further sharpen comprehension skills. Oral presentations stress fluency and inflection skills, while students practice logical paragraph and essay structure, including variety in vocabulary. Students engage in several writing processes such as brainstorming, outlining, drafting, and editing fiction and non-fiction.</p>	<p>Students develop into independent, confident readers and participate in critical analysis and discussions of shared readings. Word processing stresses the conventional editing process, correct spelling, and grammar, while we also highlight respect and responsibility during conversational group discussions.</p>
<p>Math</p> <p>Students are taught addition, subtraction, spatial relationships, graphing, probability, statistics, patterns, functions, logical thinking, and measurement, using a variety of engaging hands-on activities. Materials used include pattern blocks, various graphs, dice, tangrams, unifix cubes, unit blocks, toy animals, surveys, measuring tools, and dominoes.</p>	<p>Through a variety of games, activities, and lessons, students apply several new concepts, such as sorting and counting, pattern recognition, number sense, geometry, addition, subtraction, probability, measurement, logic, algebraic thinking, graphing, and functions. We emphasize problem solving throughout the program.</p>	<p>Students learn to apply computation skills to solve problems and develop good number sense. We teach place value, regrouping, telling time, and money using concrete materials. Addition and subtraction facts are practiced using games and activities. Pattern blocks, geoboards, and Tex-Tile Blocks guide the exploration of two- and three-dimensional shapes and fractions.</p>	<p>Students practice place value numbers up to seven digits. We construct an understanding of multiplication and introduce division skills. Measurement, area, and perimeter are practiced as part of a geometry unit, and students begin working with fractions. Problem solving integrates all math skills studied.</p>	<p>Students master whole number calculations while engaging in more complex problem solving to strengthen reasoning ability. We introduce fraction and decimal activities, estimation, logic, and formal geometric terminology. Students learn to select the appropriate type of unit for a given measurement activity and use concepts of median, mode, and mean.</p>	<p>Math skills are framed in realistic problem-solving scenarios. Students learn how to calculate percents, decimals, and fractions. We teach prime and composite numbers, factors and multiples, order of operations, two- and three-dimensional geometry, probability, statistics, data analysis, and longitude and latitude coordinates. Algebra is introduced.</p>
<p>Science</p> <p>The study of plant and animal life cycles brings students to Bay Area museums and farms. We experiment with liquids and solids through a variety of hands-on projects, and explore basic geology while looking at rivers, oceans, deserts, and mountains.</p>	<p>We consistently use an inquiry-based model to explore science. The model requires students to make observations and apply prior knowledge, ask research questions, create hypotheses, use materials and methods, collect data, analyze lab results, construct conclusions, and prepare presentations. Much of what students do in science is also tied to social studies.</p>	<p>Emphasizing interconnections to show how one thing leads to another, science combines with social studies for a more complete understanding of tropical rain forests and ancient cultures. Students learn about endangered animals, weather, erosion, and common products/medications from the rain forest while also studying Mayan and Aztec civilizations.</p>	<p>Students study the human body as a class and in small research groups. Hands-on class activities and research projects help students familiarize themselves with, and teach each other about, the different systems of the body. Students participate in an Earth science unit, which can include a study of our solar system, the Earth’s geology, or Earth’s weather.</p>	<p>The fourth and fifth grades team each day to research and explore in cooperative, mixed-age groups. Students engage in a variety of hands-on activities as they learn to use the scientific method. Units of study include astronomy, archeology, weather, geology, physics, properties of matter, energy and electricity, and botany through the study of native California plants.</p>	<p>The fourth and fifth grades team each day to research and explore in cooperative, mixed-age groups. Students engage in a variety of hands-on activities as they learn to use the scientific method. Units of study include astronomy, archeology, weather, geology, physics, properties of matter, energy and electricity, and botany through the study of native California plants.</p>
<p>Social Studies</p> <p>Folk tales, myths, and legends further the discussion of cultures all over the world. Students study geographical areas, examine aspects of society and culture, and share their family’s culture. Members of the community visit the classroom. Field trips to various places in the Bay Area expose students to a wide range of cultures.</p>	<p>An area of interest is selected and is often tied to science. Topics studied can include: rocks, seeds and plants, penguins, and rain forests. Students are guided in an in-depth study of the subject and use the inquiry-based model to generate questions, conduct research, make connections, and discuss their findings. Communities, cultures, and regions of the world are discussed.</p>	<p>In combining science and social studies, students learn to differentiate between recent events and things that happened long ago. Map skills are developed and discussions about individual characters and their actions encourage students to reflect on how heroes and ancestors from the past have made a difference in our lives.</p>	<p>We focus on communities. Students strengthen map and geography skills in order to study local neighborhoods, as well as a variety of cultures both past and present. Through weekly reporting on current events, students exercise their geography, reading, and writing skills.</p>	<p>Students study California and San Francisco cultures including native people, missions, ranchos, the gold rush, immigration, agriculture, social activism, and current events. <i>People in Profile</i>, a joint project with third grade, invites students to conduct biographical research on a historical Californian and concludes with student performances.</p>	<p>Students begin a unit on geography by simulating a road trip. They study immigration, North American indigenous peoples, European explorers, colonial America, the transcontinental railroad, westward expansion, civics, and current events.</p>

Shared Studies

Spanish

The goal of the Spanish program is to develop students’ ability to communicate in the language and to instill appreciation for the cultures studied. Kindergarten, first, and second grade students participate in familiarizing activities in their classrooms. Third grade students meet in the Spanish room three times a week to study intermediate concepts, including composition. Fourth grade students learn more verbs, vocabulary, and grammar concepts. Fifth grade students start reading *¿Que tal?* Magazine and other grade appropriate reading material. As students move through middle school, their ability to express feelings and emotions, exchange opinions, and engage in conversation improves as does their overall competencies in speaking, reading, and writing in the Spanish language. As fluency is the goal, most classes are conducted primarily in Spanish and rely on native Spanish-speaking students to help facilitate total language immersion. Native Spanish-speaking students are further challenged with supplemental materials that focus on reading and writing.

Art

With the general philosophy that everyone is an artist, the art program challenges each child to grow and experiment with various media. Curriculum in grades K–2 focuses specifically on the process of making art, whereas older elementary students learn process in addition to aestheticism and art history. All students take art classes two periods a week and encounter drawing, painting, ceramics, photography, printmaking, sculpture, collage, assemblage, and textile arts. The art program, at all grade levels, complements other academic areas of the PHS curriculum; projects may take the form of Roman mosaics, Egyptian statues, Arabic calligraphy, or American quilting. Exposure to various art forms and artistic creations allow students to see similarities and differences within our diverse world.

Physical Education

The physical education program builds on the basic gross motor skills developing in elementary-age and middle school children. We encourage teamwork by modeling and promoting good sportsmanship. Students participate in soccer, hockey, cricket, basketball, gatorball, volley-tennis, teeball/baseball, and paddleball. In addition, they engage in games with jump ropes, parachutes, hula-hoops, Frisbees and other creative activities that enhances their concept of “play.” As a member of the San Francisco Athletic League (SFAL), PHS middle school students participate on the following SFAL teams: cross-country, co-ed volleyball, girls’ basketball, boys’ basketball, co-ed softball, and co-ed futsal (indoor soccer). Grades 2–8 participate in an annual in-house Olympic competition.

Music

By participating in song-based musical activities, students learn to appreciate music. Musical activities, games, discussions, and songs create a space for many forms of expression. As students progress in grade level, musical skills grow to include ear-training, use of dynamics, and performance, while they are introduced to music terminology. Students explore music history through recordings, which enhances their connection to a large, multicultural world. They learn the importance of practice and rehearsal in order to prepare for the two major school-wide performances, Follies and May Festival.

Middle School Curriculum

<i>Sixth Grade</i>	<i>Seventh Grade</i>	<i>Eighth Grade</i>
<p>Humanities</p> <p>Students discover cultures, eras, and epochs, focusing on classical Greece and Rome, pre-colonial Africa, and the Aztec, Mayan and Incan Empires as well as other ancient cultures. Spelling, vocabulary, grammar, and creative writing supplement an introduction to the fundamentals of analytical writing and critical reading.</p>	<p>Students explore modern world history and cultures, beginning the year with an in-depth study of Latin America, followed by curricular explorations of Africa, South Asia, and Europe. Readings, role-plays, and research projects form the basis of their examination of government systems, comparative religion, globalization, and international development. Students study grammar and practice expository and creative writing.</p>	<p>Critical thinking and comprehension skills are strengthened through an investigation of U.S. history and culture. Areas of study include immigration, revolution, civics, civil war, and the Harlem Renaissance. Formal research papers allow for independent study; journaling and creative writing assignments encourage curiosity and reflection. All students write and perform an original musical called Follies.</p>
<p>Math</p> <p>We introduce students to the fundamental concepts of pre-algebra. Deepening the curriculum with a series of activities from the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, students are encouraged to work cooperatively to conduct experiments and analyze the resulting data. Group work connects directly to the concepts we study in the textbook, while each student learns, practices, and reinforces math skills.</p>	<p>After reviewing elementary arithmetic, students begin learning how to solve one- and two-step equations and inequalities. They also study factoring, exponents and powers of integers, rational numbers, equations with fractions, ratio, proportion, and percents. The study of geometric concepts, including spatial thinking, area and volume, and right triangles, culminates in designing, drafting, and creating a scaled bridge model.</p>	<p>All students study algebra, learning about graphs, linear equations, and systems of equations, motion inequalities and absolute value, rational expressions and equations, relations and functions, and quadratic equations. Students undertake several projects such as creating mobiles that reflect the orbital patterns of planets in our solar system and their relative distances from the sun.</p>
<p>Science</p> <p>In the laboratory and field, students continue to study Earth science. They learn how to collect and interpret data, draw informed conclusions, and make hypotheses. Units of study include our dynamic planet, Earth in the solar system, plate tectonics, the ecology of San Francisco Bay, the geology of the Marin Headlands, and wild weather.</p>	<p>We focus on human biology and botany for an understanding of life sciences. Students apply laboratory methodologies in their exploration of cells, genetics, digestion, nutrition, and circulation. Plant life cycles, pollination, and adaptation are studied through hands-on exploration. Students work with park rangers, monitoring turtles and amphibians in Mountain Lake Park.</p>	<p>Physical sciences serve as the foundation of the curriculum, including chemistry and the structure of matter, light and sound, force and motion, electricity and magnetism, and astronomy. Students create electrical-powered devices, participate in Great America’s physics roller coaster building competition, and complete a student-generated final.</p>

Creative Drama & Improvisation

Weekly performance classes are designed to engage children’s bodies, minds, and creative spirits. Theatrical games and improvisational exercises help students become comfortable with being seen and heard, trusting their creative impulses, and expressing themselves clearly and dynamically. Basic performance skills, emotional awareness, and fundamental improvisation techniques are taught in grades K–3. Grades 4 and 5 focus on ensemble and character work. Grades 6–8 develop a high level of comfort and confidence on the stage by working with spontaneity, creativity, and expressing authentic emotion through personal stories. Classes cooperate to produce longer and more complex projects as they move up in grade level.

Service Learning

We connect community service learning directly to classroom curriculum. At each grade level, students adopt a different theme: kindergarten is in charge of gardens and school community; first grade learns about the importance of recycling; second grade focuses on habitat; third grade concentrates on literacy; fourth grade addresses aging; fifth grade learns about hunger and homelessness; sixth grade tackles pollution; and seventh grade cares for native plants and animals. By eighth grade, students are expected to draw from their diverse experiences and broad knowledge of social issues to create their own community service projects.