

ANN AND NATE LEVINE ACADEMY
KINDERGARTEN - GRADE 8
CURRICULUM GUIDE

OVERVIEW

CURRICULUM

Ann and Nate Levine Academy offers an innovative curriculum combining the best of both general and Jewish studies. Our curriculum is the product of years of extensive research and is based on recognized models of excellence. Research-based curricula and instruction, state-of-the-art Technology and Science labs, and individualized attention ensure our students' success academically, emotionally and spiritually. Students cultivate study skills daily: at the computer, in Social Studies and Math classes, during reading, Language Arts and library, and in the study of Torah and Jewish tradition. Levine Academy is committed to creating a welcoming atmosphere of diversity. Teachers and students reflect different traditions of Jewish observance and share a variety of skills and interests. Teaching is tailored to each child's needs and strengths, not to a class average. This allows children to move ahead in areas of strength and to receive additional attention in areas of need. Our approach fosters self-confidence and promotes success.

CO-CURRICULAR PROGRAMS

At Ann and Nate Levine Academy, development of the whole child is essential. We encourage our students to explore and achieve expertise in a wide variety of enrichment activities both during the school day and after school.

Music and Art

Our curriculum includes studio art, art appreciation, music appreciation, Hebrew music, band instruction and choir.

Physical Education

The P.E. program emphasizes the acquisition and expansion of basic athletic skills and prepares students for inter- and intramural sports. All children receive physical education instruction in our new gymnasium or on our playing field. In the older grades, Levine Academy teams compete with other independent schools. Good sportsmanship is always stressed.

Student Congress

Students in Grades 5-8 have the opportunity to participate in the Levine Academy Student Congress. Congress members meet with a faculty advisor to plan school activities, community projects and fundraisers.

HIGH SCHOOL PLACEMENT

Ann and Nate Levine Academy has a state-of-the-art counseling program for high school placement. The process begins in the fall of the Eighth Grade with a parent meeting that discusses how to select a high school for your student that "fits" him or her in terms of intellectual, emotional, and social growth. Steps include completing a resume of your child for reference by teachers who will be writing letters of recommendation; visits by the counselor and Head of School to independent and public magnet schools or public honors programs to describe the Levine Academy's challenging academic program and how the students interested in that school have excelled in the program; and, finally, individualized counseling for each family about how to select the high school program best suited for your child. Ann and Nate Levine Academy's high school placement program is founded on the principles of selecting the best school "fit" for your student and then advocating for that student.

GENERAL OVERVIEW OF BECK LOWER SCHOOL

The Janet and Jeffrey Beck Lower School curriculum is designed to foster academic excellence and meet individual needs, nurturing each student's natural curiosity and sense of wonder. Motivated from within, our children acquire a sense of self and accomplishment that allow for experiences of creativity, independent study, choice, and responsibility. These experiences are reinforced through warm, disciplined classroom environments and loving teachers devoted to enhancing each child's personal development. Embracing the sciences, mathematics, the humanities, Hebrew language and Jewish studies, the arts, and physical and health education, our curriculum integrates material taught within each grade and across the grade levels. In this way, we lay the foundation for a liberal education and lifetime love of learning. Through emphasis on critical and intuitive thinking, as well as analysis and creative problem-solving, our children acquire the intellectual independence essential to succeed in a world of accelerating change.

Differentiated instruction designed to meet the learning needs of each individual student begins during the Lower School years as learning specialists, counselors, and classroom teachers work toward developing Individual Learning Plans. Students are stretched to meet their maximum potential in academics, the arts, and as individuals. Emphasis is placed on social responsibility within the school community and the community at large.

JANET AND JEFFREY BECK LOWER SCHOOL

KINDERGARTEN

Overview

In Kindergarten it is our goal to provide a stimulating, nurturing learning environment where children are encouraged to work towards:

- Developing self-awareness, inter-personal skills and responsible behaviors, which will enable them to be successful in school and life.
- Developing literacy skills that enable students to progress in reading, comprehension, writing and oral communications.
- Laying the foundation for students to explore, conjecture, and reason logically in mathematics.
- Realizing they can learn about their world by asking questions and conducting experiments.

Language Arts/Reading

Kindergarten literacy instruction begins with a sound-symbol program that employs visual, auditory and kinesthetic activities and encourages children to take ownership of their learning of decoding strategies. We integrate reading aloud, shared reading, reading centers, guided reading, independent reading and shared/interactive writing. It is our goal that each child sees him/herself as a competent learner who is able to realize his/her potential.

Mathematics

The Math curriculum is built around Kindergarten Everyday Mathematics, a program created through the University of Chicago School Mathematics Project. Concepts are presented in clear, concrete ways. After presentation, manipulatives are given to the children to reinforce the skills just learned. The children are given materials and time to explore, develop, and refine their understanding of the math they use in real-life situations. Students enjoy playing games and doing activities that provide experience and practice that lead to a growing understanding of number theory and mathematical skills such as counting, computing, measurement, geometry, patterns, and the collection and interpretation of data.

Science

The Kindergarten Science curriculum takes advantage of the natural curiosity children have about the world around them, as well as their love of experimentation. Students use hands-on activities to address concepts related to life, physical and earth sciences, as well as the nature of science. It is our goal that Kindergarten students experience science in meaningful, fun ways that will help them deepen their understanding of science and how it relates to them.

Social Studies

The Social Studies curriculum revolves around national and religious holidays. It is through these touchstone events that students are provided with the opportunities to understand that being a good citizen in a community involves acting in certain ways. Students are introduced to the concept that history relates to events, people, and places of other times allowing for them to become aware of the difference between needs and wants. It is our goal that they become well-rounded individuals who can fulfill a positive role in the community.

Jewish Studies/Hebrew

Kindergarten students are introduced to Torah study through stories and celebration of Jewish holidays. Students are introduced to prayer (*tefilah*), emphasizing blessings (*brachot*) for the day, food, and various occasions. Kindergartners are also introduced to Hebrew language through an immersion curriculum called Chalav U'dvash. Units include phonetics, the aleph-bet, numbers, colors, parts of the classroom, and foods.

FIRST GRADE

Overview

First Grade is a year of growth and change. All units of study incorporate four major areas of development: Language, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies. First Grade also focuses on four main goals: expanding students' appreciation for our world and natural environment; developing as independent learners; realizing the natural consequences for one's actions; fostering a sense of respect for themselves and others.

Language Arts/Reading

Reading and Language Arts instruction are taught through a combination of phonics instruction and whole language. Reading is an integral part of the daily Language Arts program and is integrated within all units of study. First Graders use formal and informal writing processes. They begin to express their creative thoughts in a written form through the use of journals and story writing. Students also begin understanding basic sentence structure and write stories that have a beginning, middle and end. They apply the steps of the writing process to their stories to become expressive and imaginative writers.

Mathematics

Everyday Math, developed by the University of Chicago Mathematics Program, is used in First Grade. Everyday Math starts with basic concepts and builds on the fundamental strands such as numeration and counting, operations and relations, and problem-solving. Also, students are expected to master basic math facts in the areas of addition and subtraction, and students will receive enrichment and extension as appropriate.

Science

The Science curriculum is organized around the three main areas of the natural sciences: physical science, earth science, and life science. Science is integrated with the Language Arts and Social Studies program. Emphasis is placed in the areas of scientific knowledge, processes, manipulative skills, and thinking.

Social Studies

The Social Studies curriculum teaches the students about their relationship to the classroom, school, and the community. Students will begin to understand concepts of time and chronology, and distinguishing between past, present, and future. Students will also begin to recognize the continents and the habitats of natural wildlife. Each unit of study incorporates reading, writing, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills that focus on a specific content area.

Jewish Studies/Hebrew

Jewish studies and Hebrew are integrated through a curriculum called TaL AM, which includes a survey of the stories of the Torah in the Book of Genesis. Emphasis is placed upon learning the characters in Genesis and the primary themes, such as God, Israel, and morality. TaL AM also helps students build their Hebrew abilities, especially proficiency in reading and writing. Students are immersed in conversational Hebrew, and holidays are emphasized.

JANET AND JEFFREY BECK LOWER SCHOOL

SECOND GRADE

Overview

The overall curriculum goals in Second Grade are appreciating others and their differences, and being responsible for personal actions. These goals, as well as the values of the Ethical Covenant, are incorporated throughout each unit of study: community/bats, mall, five senses, and water.

Language Arts/Reading

Second Grade Language Arts is taught through a combination of whole language and phonemic methodology. The curriculum focuses on reading comprehension, writing, spelling, and grammatical skills. Second Grade uses a basal series along with novel studies. This provides an enriching reading curriculum. The Language Arts component also involves writing, spelling, and grammatical skills.

Mathematics

Second Graders use the Everyday Math Program, developed by the University of Chicago School Mathematics Project. This curriculum builds on fundamental mathematical strands such as numeration and counting, problem-solving, and operations and relations. The component of basic fact mastery is continued for addition and subtraction, as well as beginning mastery of multiplication facts. The focus of the program is on higher-order thinking skills, as well as application and analysis.

Science

Second Grade science introduces the students to the natural world, living and non-living organisms, and the five senses. This is done through various hands-on and demonstrated experiments. Additionally, the children produce various class projects and participate in their first dissection experience.

Social Studies

The Social Studies curriculum in Second Grade includes studies of communities, basic economics, and water as a resource. Through these units the students develop an understanding of the importance of their roles in society.

Jewish Studies/Hebrew

Jewish Studies and Hebrew are integrated through a curriculum called TaL AM, which builds upon what was taught in First Grade. TaL AM includes a survey of the stories from the Torah in the Book of Genesis, continuing through much of Exodus. Students discuss themes from the Torah and take part in activities built around those discussions. Hebrew studies emphasize proficiency in reading and writing, and students are immersed in conversational Hebrew. Hebrew language also includes the study and identification of fundamental aspects of grammar. Holidays are also emphasized.

THIRD GRADE

Overview

The global curriculum goals for Third Graders all involve organization, both personal and societal. They learn how all living creatures organize themselves in varying ways and how all members of these organizations depend upon one another. These observations permeate every unit taught in Third Grade.

Language Arts/Reading

Third Grade Language is taught using a multi-pronged approach. Separate curricular areas include reading, creative writing, spelling, vocabulary and grammar. Third Grade reading uses a research based program to teach a wide variety of comprehension strategies. These skills are later reinforced through the reading of grade level appropriate novels. This dichotomy provides both an entertaining and enriching classroom experience for young readers.

Mathematics

Levine Academy's Beck Lower School has adopted the SRA Real Math program, developed and published by the McGraw-Hill Companies for grades three and four. This comprehensive program teaches basic math skills in a real world context, encouraging learners to think mathematically. Students are encouraged to reason through problems and to engage themselves in a wide variety of math related activities. The curriculum includes such diverse components as computation, algebraic function, decimals, fractions, and geometry. An emphasis is placed on the mastery of multiplication facts 0-12.

Science

Third Grade Science continues the exploration of the natural world, concentrating on both plants and animals. The students explore these concepts through the Houghton Mifflin Science series. They enrich their understanding of a wide range of related topics by engaging in hands-on investigations and observations.

Social Studies

The Social Studies program in Third Grade includes units focused on maps, pioneers, and the Middle Ages. These units reinforce the concept that all successful societies are reciprocal.

Jewish Studies/Hebrew

Jewish Studies and Hebrew are integrated through a curriculum called TaL AM, which builds upon what was taught in Second Grade. TaL AM includes a continuing survey of the stories from the Torah in the Book of Genesis and some of Exodus. Students discuss themes from the Torah and take part in activities built around those discussions. Hebrew studies emphasize proficiency in reading and writing, and students are immersed in conversational Hebrew. Hebrew language also includes the continued study and identification of fundamental aspects of grammar. Holidays are also emphasized.

JANET AND JEFFREY BECK LOWER SCHOOL

FOURTH GRADE

Overview

The major goal of Fourth Grade is to ensure students are aware of how changes impact our world. This touches all areas of the curriculum, including, but not limited to, a study of American government and geography, the human body, forces that shape the earth, Texas, and inventions. Emphasis is placed on students becoming independent learners to ensure they have the necessary skills to be successful in middle school, such as:

- Using a variety of note taking techniques
- Displaying ability to recognize and extract relevant information from text
- Developing study skills to prepare for examinations
- Researching independently
- Acquiring organizational and time management skills with target dates
- Implementing reading strategies and writing skills

Language Arts/Reading

In Reading and Language Arts, we are reinforcing the comprehension reading strategies taught in lower grades and introducing additional strategies to enable the children to comprehend higher level material. By utilizing short stories, newspaper articles, novels, and other instructional materials that are both fiction and nonfiction, we are building on previously obtained skills. Strong emphasis is placed on the six traits of the writing process and the Ethical Covenant. Students are expected to apply the varied steps of the writing process and write specific assignments.

Mathematics

Fourth Grade students are taught to think mathematically so they can reason, understand, and apply mathematics meaningfully in order to identify, solve, and communicate about real-life problems. Students will be engaged in math in order to see its use and understanding in our environment.

Science

In Science, students will explore the three states of matter, skeletal system, natural disasters, and inventions. Students will hold their own Invention Convention where they present their product and discuss the problem it solved. Additionally, students will participate in a dissection experience.

Social Studies

In Social Studies, students will be learning the branches of government, the election process, past presidents, as well as state and local officials. Students bring current events into the classroom and participate in the NewsBowl.

Jewish Studies/Hebrew

Jewish Studies and Hebrew are integrated through a curriculum called TaL AM, which builds upon what was taught in Third Grade. TaL AM includes a survey of the stories from the Torah in the Book of Exodus. Students discuss themes from the Torah and take part in activities built around those discussions. Hebrew studies emphasize continued proficiency in reading and writing, and students are immersed in conversational Hebrew. Hebrew language also includes the continued study and identification of fundamental aspects of grammar. Holidays are also emphasized.

GENERAL OVERVIEW OF MIDDLE SCHOOL

Middle School at Levine Academy offers a rigorous academic program designed to foster academic excellence and meet individual needs, nurturing each student's natural curiosity and sense of wonder. Students in Fifth through Eighth Grade are encouraged to think creatively and challenge themselves and their peers to reach new levels of achievement.

The Middle School experience emphasizes individual development, self-responsibility, being a positive member of the school community and the community at large, as well as being an active participant in one's own learning. Our outstanding teachers emphasize higher-order thinking skills, critical thinking, and problem-solving.

Outside the classroom, students have many opportunities to nurture their individual interests and unique abilities. Students may choose to develop leadership skills by participating in Student Congress, Student Ambassador program, National Junior Honor Society, or Va'ad Tefillah (a group that coordinates religious services). There are also many opportunities for participation in state, national, and worldwide competitions in the areas of Language Arts, current events, Social Studies, Hebrew language, writing, and math. Middle School students also have outstanding opportunities to experience their world through travel throughout Texas, to Washington, D.C., New York, and Israel.

Levine Academy Middle School students study Hebrew and Jewish studies including selections from the Tanach (Bible) with classical and modern commentators. The study of history progresses from ancient through the rabbinic, medieval, and modern periods. All Middle School students participate in a program of Jewish ethics and values, which centers on respect, relationships, and personal growth. Jewish holidays and special commemorative days are learned through educational units and programming.

With so many opportunities to learn and achieve both inside and outside the classroom, students leave Levine Academy well prepared to excel in the challenging high school years and beyond.

MIDDLE SCHOOL

FIFTH GRADE

Language Arts

Fifth Grade Language Arts centers on a balanced and comprehensive literature based curriculum. Students gain mastery of the Language Arts processes of reading, listening, and speaking through an integrated literary approach based on the “Six Traits of Writing” and the study of various genres of literature. The focus of each genre relates thematically and includes a challenging study of literary elements. Students develop reading comprehension skills by utilizing strategies focusing on vocabulary, structure, and author’s craft. Students demonstrate proficiency in the writing of reader response journals, multi-paragraph essays, and an extensive study of grammar and spelling. Students participate in numerous projects that build with increasing complexity throughout the year including Outside Reading, Academic Fair and Speech Contest. Individual writing portfolios are continually updated allowing students to see themselves as active communicators and allow for self-evaluation.

Social Studies

The curriculum in Fifth Grade Social Studies is World Cultures, with geography, global awareness, and current events being the main areas of focus. The curriculum is research based, with group and individual projects at the conclusion of each unit. The year begins with the study of geography and the geographic features that make up our earth. Next is the study of the ancient civilizations of Egypt, Greece and Rome, followed by a brief study of the Middle Ages and life during medieval times. The second half of the year focuses on the study of each continent and the unique countries and cultures that make up our world.

Math

The Fifth Grade Math program incorporates the introduction of mathematical concepts, reteaching, practice, and enrichment activities into each lesson. These are applied to the basic operations of addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division of whole numbers, fractions, decimals, percents, and geometry. The students utilize a variety of math manipulatives, games, whiteboards and markers, protractors, and calculators to enhance their learning.

Integrated Science

Success in Science will be determined by the student’s ability to process skills such as observing; classifying; measuring and using numbers; communicating; inferring; predicting; collecting, recording, and interpreting data; identifying and controlling variables; defining operationally; making hypotheses; experimenting; and making and using models. Success will also be determined by the student’s ability to use critical thinking skills and scientific reasoning skills. In Fifth Grade the students will learn specifically about life processes, the solar system, matter and energy, populations and ecosystems, the solid earth, and light and sound.

Jewish Studies

As the students transition from Lower School to Middle School, they move to more advanced levels of Humash study in *Sefer Shmot* (Exodus) using historical and archaeological context, as well as Rashi's commentaries. Students are introduced to the Tanach with the study of *Sefer Yehoshua* (Joshua) and to Mishna study utilizing the text of *Pirkei Avot*. They also delve into the deeper meanings of the prayers, and learn practical synagogue skills, including Torah trope.

Hebrew

“Haverim B’Ivrit” - “Friends in Hebrew” curriculum focuses on the daily life and concerns of Jewish children, such as family, friendship, birthdays, field trips, Israel, Jewish holidays, and more. The program includes a wide variety of texts, poems, folk tales, biblical and historical passages, games, and language activities. Hebrew studies emphasize continued proficiency in reading and writing, and conversational Hebrew. Hebrew language also includes the continued study and identification of fundamental aspects of grammar.

SIXTH GRADE

Language Arts

Sixth Grade Language Arts aims for complete immersion in language so that students become increasingly confident in all forms of communication. The students read from many genres while learning to pay close attention to detail and to form deeper insight into written pieces. The reading of various genres also serves as models of excellent writing. As developing writers, the students further refine their personal voice while also acquiring stronger grammatical skills and a more polished voice. They review extensively the rules of grammar and punctuation and learn many new sentence structures. In addition to other creative and expository writing assignments, journals are due twice each month. A writing workshop is a core component of the class. Students also explore many works of literature together, ranging from poems to novels to non-fiction, and do many projects based on this reading. They complete a book card twice each month based on outside reading, and twice each year, they participate in an outside reading extravaganza.

Social Studies

The Sixth Grade Social Studies curriculum focuses on relationships and independence. Study begins with an overview of basic map skills and geography concepts, with a focus on United States geography. Students explore the history of our nation, the interaction between explorers and Native Americans, colonization of North America, the American Revolution, our country's government, and westward expansion. Finally, students discover how differences between the northern and southern states led to the Civil War.

Math

The Sixth Grade Math program incorporates an introduction, review and reteaching, practice and enrichment activities in order to expand on all the topics taught to them in the previous year. The concepts are applied to all four basic mathematical operations including fractions, decimals, percents, and topics in geometry. The students continue to use manipulatives, games, whiteboards and markers, protractors and calculators to enhance their learning.

Integrated Science

Success in Science will be determined by the student's ability to process skills such as observing; classifying; measuring and using numbers; communicating; inferring; predicting; collecting, recording, and interpreting data; identifying and controlling variables; defining operationally; making hypotheses; experimenting; and making and using models. Success will also be determined by the student's ability to use critical thinking skills and scientific reasoning skills. In Sixth Grade students will learn specifically about cells and microbes, the changing earth, nature of matter, oceanography, and forces and motion.

Jewish Studies

Students continue to study the prophets with *Sefer Shoftim* (Judges), utilizing the Hebrew text and Rashi Commentary. Humash study introduces them to *Sefer Vayikra* (Leviticus) and the Torah's Legal Code. Mishna study includes *Masechet Bava Metzja*. Students also learn practical synagogue skills including Mincha/Maariv and Havdalah, and are given the tools to delve into the deeper meanings of the prayers.

Hebrew

Students begin the NETA Hebrew language curriculum which is an innovative approach to Hebrew language immersion. NETA is a dynamic Hebrew language curriculum that integrates the four major language-acquisition skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) by immersing students in everything from classical Hebrew texts to Israeli music, and from historical documents to poetry and drama. Students encounter materials and exercises of increasing complexity as they progress toward proficiency in Hebrew. The curriculum is sequential and based on a structured linguistic progression.

MIDDLE SCHOOL

SEVENTH GRADE

Language Arts

Seventh Grade Language Arts represents a literature-based curriculum that emphasizes oral and written communication. Just as the students are experiencing the difficult transition from childhood into adolescence, so the theme for the year stresses the individual's place in the universe. The approach to the readings (short story, drama, novel, and poetry) extends beyond comprehension and application to evaluation of concepts. Topics range from literary terms, figures of speech, and public speaking, to grammar, writing, and vocabulary. All material is related to the literature studied at the time. By the end of the year, students will be able to do so much more than merely retell the plot of a story; they will also develop a sense of pride in their own voice.

Social Studies

The Seventh Grade history course includes a brief review of the Reconstruction Era and the closing of the frontier. The focus is upon United States developments in the twentieth century with emphasis on industrialization, immigration, growth of cities, World War I, isolationism, the Depression, World War II, the Cold War and current United States national and international issues. Global geography and economics are areas of special concentration. There is a strong emphasis on writing, critical thinking, and problem-solving.

Math

Pre-Algebra students are taught effective strategies to make the transition from arithmetic to Algebra. The areas of study include integers, rational numbers, linear equations, inequalities and functions, polynomials, and application of these concepts to geometry. The students use online resources, calculators, whiteboards and markers, and rulers to assist them in their pre-Algebra studies.

Science: Life Science & Introduction To Chemistry

Students of Life Science acquire knowledge and appreciation of the living Earth and its many diverse life forms. Students study the structure, chemical interactions and processes of cells, as well as the morphology of all major taxonomic classifications and the evolution of characteristics in organisms. Chemistry introduces students to the basic composition of life and the interactions of fundamental elements that have caused the evolution of life on Earth. Students explore particles that compose matter, changes of state and physical and chemical changes. Students learn the Periodic Table of Elements and the physical properties of the groups and periods, and study atomic bonding, chemical reactions and organic chemistry. Knowledge of the use of scientific tools and evaluation methods is developed, and hands-on activities include labs, experiments, dissections, demonstrations, and special projects and learning games as a class, in groups and individually.

Jewish Studies

In Seventh Grade, students use various Humash source texts to learn about major aspects of Jewish life including Shabbat, Kashrut, and life cycle events. They continue learning Mishna, but gain a greater understanding of its context through their study of the Rabbinic period. Additionally, students study the *bagim* (holidays) using various Mishnaic texts including *Yoma*, *Sukkot* and *Megilla*, and continue their Tanach study of *Sefer Shmuel Alef* (Samuel).

Hebrew

Students continue the NETA Hebrew language curriculum which is an innovative approach to Hebrew language immersion. NETA is a dynamic Hebrew language curriculum that integrates the four major language-acquisition skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) by immersing students in everything from classical Hebrew texts to Israeli music, and from historical documents to poetry and drama. Students encounter materials and exercises of increasing complexity as they progress toward proficiency in Hebrew. The curriculum is sequential and based on a structured linguistic progression.

EIGHTH GRADE

Language Arts

Eighth Grade Language Arts offers a literature-based curriculum that emphasizes oral and written communication as a preparation for high school. It stresses the theme of the individual going against the odds. Utilizing an analytical approach of the readings (novel, drama, memoir, short story, and poetry), students not only comprehend the material, but also discover how it relates to their own world. Literary concepts, figures of speech, grammar, writing principles, public speaking, and vocabulary are a natural outgrowth of the literature. By the end of the year, students apply all the principles learned in the production of *Visions*, our school's literary magazine.

Social Studies

In Eighth Grade Social Studies, students learn about the history and development of modern Israel from the early years of Zionism to the present. Topics include the Five Aliyot, the Balfour Declaration and World War I, the Holocaust, the establishment of the State of Israel, Israel's wars and leaders, and the Arab/Israeli conflict. There is a strong emphasis on analysis, discussion, problem solving, and writing.

Math

In Algebra the students embark on a course of study that lays the foundation for virtually all of higher mathematics. They are building this foundation by learning the basics of Algebra. The content of the Algebra curriculum includes axioms and properties, factoring polynomials, the use of the quadratic formula, graphing multi-variable equations, solving systems of equations, rational and radical Algebraic expressions, and inequalities. Typically the students utilize whiteboards, markers, and calculators as they master Algebra skills.

Science: Earth Science & Introduction To Physics

Students of Earth Science acquire knowledge and appreciation of the physical Earth, its history, formation, composition, surface and internal forces, and its place in the universe. Students learn how to read and utilize various types of maps, study the formation and physical properties of minerals and rocks, and learn about geologic time and the formation and uses of fossils. Students examine plate tectonics, surface erosion and deposition, Earth's atmosphere, weather and climate, and theories concerning the formation and future of the universe. Physics acquaints students with the nature of energy, motion and force, and how these interact and affect matter. Hands-on applications include labs, modules, demonstrations, modeling, special projects, learning games and class activities as a class, in groups and individually, and students increase their skills in the use of scientific tools and evaluation methods during various laboratory experiences and projects.

Jewish Studies

Eighth Grade students continue their study of Jewish history up to the Modern Era, serving as a companion to their Social Studies curriculum on Israel. They carry on with their study of Rabbinic literature in Mishnah and Talmud, focusing on key moral concepts including those established in our Ethical Covenant. Additionally, students study *Sefer Melachim Alef* (Kings). A thesis project, on a Jewish topic of their choice, is required of all Eighth Grade students. The project includes an in-class presentation to their peers summarizing their research and studies.

Hebrew

Students continue the NETA Hebrew language curriculum which is an innovative approach to Hebrew language immersion. NETA is a dynamic Hebrew language curriculum that integrates the four major language-acquisition skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) by immersing students in everything from classical Hebrew texts to Israeli music, and from historical documents to poetry and drama. Students encounter materials and exercises of increasing complexity as they progress toward proficiency in Hebrew. The curriculum is sequential and based on a structured linguistic progression.

LOWER SCHOOL AND MIDDLE SCHOOL SPECIALS

MUSIC

The primary focus of the Music curriculum is to help students learn how to enjoy and use the power of music wisely throughout their lives. Students are exposed to many different styles of music, including classical and pop, so they can develop their own personal preferences, be able to recognize “world-class” excellence when they see or hear it, and choose music and entertainment that reinforces positive values and behaviors. Students are encouraged to become life-long music makers, even if it is just singing or playing a musical instrument for their own personal enjoyment. Opportunities are provided to enable students to express themselves creatively with special music projects or by writing their own original songs, which can be incredibly fulfilling and developed just like any other talent or skill.

Students in Middle School have the option of taking General Music or Band for their music component. Band consists of one weekly rehearsal with other grade level students during the school day. When students reach the Seventh Grade, after two years of Concert Band, they have the option of remaining in the band program and entering the Honor Band. Additionally, Seventh and Eighth Grade students have the option of auditioning for the Lab Band, a smaller elite group that plays jazz, rock and fusion music using a more contemporary instrumentation. The Concert Band, Honor Band and Lab Band perform for athletic events, concerts, regional competitions, and special events for the school. All band students are required to take an additional private lesson during the week, scheduled beyond the school day. Students have the choice of playing flute, clarinet, saxophone, coronet/trumpet, trombone, tuba and percussion (drums). Students in the band programs, not only learn how to read and perform music, they learn how to work together as a group. Discipline is a key factor in their success. Upperclassmen learn to become leaders and bring the underclassmen along in becoming good musicians and leaders.

For many of our students, general music class is a welcome “change of pace” from their normal academic routine. Students get to experience a variety of fun activities that include speaking, acting, singing, reading music, counting, clapping, conducting, moving, dancing, and playing instruments. Fun drills and “boys vs girls” competitions are used to help them learn the fundamentals of music in a creative, enjoyable way. All students have the opportunity to participate in exciting and memorable performances each year whether it be in the annual Zimriyah Song Festival, talent show, Spring Revue, school band, jazz-rock combo, or show choirs.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

The Physical Education curriculum takes a whole-child approach to physical fitness. Students have the opportunity to experience a wide range of team sports, enhance skill development, engage in teamwork, experience a competitive environment, build self-esteem, develop appropriate sportsmanship, and instill a life-long enjoyment of physical activity.

Middle School P.E. builds on what was learned in Lower School, continuing the development of gross motor skills and coordination, and targeting specific skills needed in team sports. Teamwork, appropriate sportsmanship, an understanding of the rules of the game, and the spirit of competition are integrated into each sports unit. Students are encouraged to push themselves to go beyond their individual limits, at whatever level that might be, and achieve goals for themselves that they never thought were possible. Students in grades five through eight may continue to participate in a number of school intramural teams or may try out, beginning in Sixth Grade, for a varsity sports team.

LOWER SCHOOL AND MIDDLE SCHOOL SPECIALS

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Information Technology at Levine Academy focuses on having students think creatively, develop innovative products using technology, and build upon their knowledge as they move from skill to skill. Students utilize existing knowledge to generate new ideas and products, creatively express themselves, use systems thinking to explore complex systems, and work toward identifying trends and forecasting possibilities.

Students use digital media and environments to communicate and work collaboratively to support individual learning and contribute to the learning of others. They collaborate, publish, and interact with peers, experts, and others employing a variety of digital media and formats.

It is important for our students to communicate information and ideas effectively to multiple audiences utilizing a variety of media and formats. They develop a cultural understanding and global awareness by engaging with learners of other cultures and contribute to project teams to produce original works.

Research and information retrieval is an essential part of the curriculum, requiring that students access, retrieve, manage, and evaluate information using digital tools. They locate, organize, analyze, evaluate, synthesize, and use information from a variety of sources and media. Additionally, students learn to evaluate and select information sources and technological tools based on the appropriateness to specific tasks. Finally, they process data and report results.

Critical thinking, problem-solving and decision-making are all parts of the information technology curriculum. Students use critical thinking skills to plan and conduct research, manage projects, solve problems and make informed decisions using appropriate technology tools. They also identify and define authentic problems and significant questions for investigation and plan strategies to guided inquiry, plan and manage activities to develop solutions and complete projects, collect and analyze data to identify solutions and make informed decisions, and use multiple processes and diverse perspectives to explore alternative solutions.

As a Jewish Day School, Levine Academy insists that students understand human, cultural, and societal issues related to technology and practice legal and ethical behavior. We advocate and practice safe, responsible use of information and technology, exhibit positive attitudes toward technology uses that support collaboration, learning, and productivity, demonstrate personal responsibility for lifelong learning, and exercise proactive leadership for digital citizenship.

ART

Levine Academy Fine Arts curriculum is based on national art education standards, art history, cross curriculum, and the creative process. Students are taught about famous artists, genres, history, and mixed media art. Vincent Van Gogh, Chuck Close, Leonardo Da Vinci, Marc Chagall are just a few of the many artists students study. They are shown examples of famous artworks, and often recreate artworks in their own imaginative way. Emphasis is placed on creativity, learning how to use supplies, and the actual process to create a work of art. Students spend several weeks working on one project to fruition. The goal is to encourage students to have a meaningful relationship with the arts throughout their lives.



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