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## **Mission Statement**

Mirman School is an independent co-educational school designed to meet the needs of highly gifted children ages 5 to 14. The school recognizes that the innate intellectual potential of the child is not enough to ensure the actualization of giftedness; there must be nurture to maximize nature. Having recognized that highly gifted children learn differently, the school is committed to providing an academically appropriate learning environment that is stimulating, secure and joyful, with an age appropriate social and emotional setting in which highly gifted children can blossom and maximize their potential. The school values the many facets and faces of giftedness in the diversity of its programs and its student population. Furthermore, children are encouraged and guided to utilize their intellect and their compassion in a constructive way to help society and their fellow men and women.

## **Educational Goals**

- To provide an atmosphere in which each child can learn based upon ability and without artificial boundaries or stops for grade level.
- To stimulate the highly gifted child's desire to learn with superior teachers who support and develop each child's unique potential to the fullest.
- To provide the students with a safe and nurturing environment within which they feel safe to explore, develop, take risks, and grow intellectually, physically, socially, and morally.
- To foster in children the ability to think critically, to become problem solvers, to encourage love and appreciation for the arts, to develop physical fitness and to become independent lifelong learners.
- To provide appropriate academic challenges and opportunities for highly gifted children, while nurturing age appropriate social and emotional growth.
- To strengthen and guide highly gifted children to utilize their giftedness and compassion to contribute to society and benefit their fellow men and women.
- To provide the parents of highly gifted children with information, support and opportunities for involvement in forging a partnership to encourage their children's growth and development.
- To share with other educators the methods, techniques and strategies, which have evolved at Mirman School for working with highly gifted children.

## **Mirman School Philosophy**

The philosophy of Mirman School is predicated on the recognition that highly gifted children learn differently; that their needs can best be met in an environment designed to address their distinctive intellectual, social and emotional characteristics.

Mirman School was founded in 1962 by Dr. and Mrs. Norman Mirman as a unique educational environment for children identified as intellectually highly gifted by achieving a score of 145 on the Stanford Binet LM. A corresponding score of 138 or above on the WPPSI III or WISC IV also identifies the target population of application. Educators and psychologists no longer regard intelligence as fixed nor its development predetermined by genes. Potential alone is not enough to ensure the actualizing of giftedness. We recognize that for those children who represent the upper end of the mental ability continuum, our present national public educational system is often inappropriate. Children whose abilities place them above the average must be provided with differentiated and appropriate instructional experiences. Creating a peer community of highly gifted children singularly supports the effective nurture of their cognitive abilities, the development of their self-esteem and the fostering of their healthy social adjustment.

We believe that an educational program appropriate to meeting the needs of highly gifted children differs in the pace of learning and the teaching strategies that are utilized. In accordance with the principles of gifted education, such a program must emphasize depth, breadth, complexity, and novelty. It must provide a stimulating and flexible environment to encourage risk taking, to promote interdisciplinary exploration and to foster creativity, critical thinking and the lifelong love of learning. Such an educational approach sets no artificial ceiling or limits to an individual's academic growth; allows children to go beyond the standard skills expected or required at any particular age or grade level. For this reason the school does not have traditional grade

levels but groups children according to age, ability and skills acquisition.

We believe that surrounding a highly gifted child with a community of his/her peers strengthens and supports the child's social and emotional development. The highly gifted child is often isolated in the traditional classroom, where he/she may be ignored, resented, prohibited, or inhibited from developing their learning potential.

Providing an educational environment that encourages and helps children develop attitudes and habits of respect, responsibility, ethical decision-making, caring, and service gives gifted children a strong foundation and motivation to utilize their giftedness in the service of their community and the world.

Ultimately, Mirman School strives to build an exemplary community where children, parents, teachers, and administrators work together in partnership to model the kind of enrichment, inspiration and love of learning that our students will embrace long after they have matriculated from their alma mater.



## **ABOUT THE CURRICULUM GUIDE**

The Mirman School Curriculum Guide is designed as an informational resource for parents, students, prospective parents, and prospective students. The programs of study delineated in this guide present a baseline of academic opportunities, not a ceiling for possible academic achievement at any educational level. Consistent with the philosophy of Mirman School, all teachers and administrators remain committed to providing all students the academic and intellectual engagement and instruction they need, as their academic performance and/or the professional evaluation of their teachers warrant.

### **LOWER SCHOOL COURSE OF STUDY**

Mirman School is divided into two educational divisions: the Lower School and the Upper School. The Lower School curriculum is comparable to grades 1 through 5; the Upper School's curriculum is comparable to four years of middle school, grades 6 through 9. The demonstration of a willingness to pursue academic excellence, positive interest and involvement in the learning process and a commitment to academic integrity are important for the continuance of a student's studies. In addition to these academic expectations are the assumptions that all students demonstrate an attitude of respect and act in accordance with the rules of conduct established by teachers in their classes. All students are expected to participate in the co-curricular programs of the school by participating in all field trips, attending assemblies and by completing community service.

All students of the Lower School receive daily instruction in all of the following subjects:

- Reading and Literature
- Language Arts and Writing
- Spelling
- Mathematics
- Social Studies

All students of the Lower School receive weekly instruction in all of the following subjects:

- Art
- Character Development
- Computer/Technology
- Library
- Music
- Physical Education
- Science
- Spanish

Creative Dramatics begins in Rooms Three

All Lower School classes begin at 8:00 a.m.; afternoon dismissal is at 3:00 p.m.

## **Rooms One**

In Rooms One students develop independence, responsibility and social skills along with their academics. Many of the children cannot read when they enter in September, but by June they are reading chapter books. At entry most do not know what the “plus” and “minus” sign mean but add and subtract with regrouping by the year’s end. Within the math program, students evolve into mathematicians as they solve word problems, construct geometric figures and research information for a variety of graphs. Within the reading and language arts program, students who enter with little or no writing or reading skills develop into enthusiastic readers and young creative authors capable of expressing themselves in complete, coherent sentences. In June students contrast their written and mathematical work from their early days at entry with what they have been able to achieve at year’s end. They notice the leaps and bounds that they have taken in one academic year. Not only have they been set on to the road of scholarship, but they have blossomed in all areas.

### **Reading and Literature**

Students develop comprehension skills of grade level 1.5 or higher. They master letter sounds, vowels, consonant blends, prefixes, and suffixes. Children employ decoding skills and develop inferencing skills. Additionally, students develop an ability to categorize, to think logically and to employ deductive thinking skills.

### **Language Arts/ Writing**

Students are introduced to capital letters at the beginning of a sentence and punctuation at the end of sentences. They use their imaginations and are able to brainstorm in order to compose a story with a beginning, middle and an end. Finally, they are introduced to the concept of editing.

## **Spelling**

Students are introduced to spelling strategies and to regular use of the dictionary.

## **Math**

At this level, students count by 2's, 5's, 10's, 25's to 100. Children count to 100, use numbers to 100 and add and subtract two digit numbers. They understand family facts, turnaround facts, doubles, doubles plus one, sum and difference. Children are introduced to place value. They identify numbers before, after and between, and the concept of fewer and less than, more than and greater than. In addition, children discover the concept of even and odd numbers. They work with bar graphs, picture graphs and circle graphs. They are introduced to squares, circles, triangles, and rectangles. Children recognize and understand the value of a penny, nickel, dime, and quarter, as well as the sum of coins. They are introduced to fractions, are able to identify the numerator and denominator and to understand the measurement of inches and centimeters. Students are introduced to time: hour and half hour. They work with patterns, attempt problem solving strategies and are able to solve and to create their own word problems.

## **Science**

Students learn the steps of the Scientific Method and practice the steps within the curriculum. They develop an appreciation for all varieties of living organisms. Children learn the characteristics of environments by studying land formations, weather and living organisms of various environments. They learn to use science-related technologies like microscopes and computers to enhance a given study. In addition, Rooms One students learn about desert habitats, rainforest habitats, fresh water habitats, salt water habitats, and the human skeletal system.

## **Social Studies**

Students are introduced to community helpers, transportation, map skills, and famous Americans. All Mirman school children are introduced to the continent of Asia through interdisciplinary activities during the 2008-2009 school year.

## **Spanish**

Students recognize colors, shapes and body parts; recognize the Spanish alphabet and numbers 1-50. They utilize appropriate greetings with friends, family and teachers. Children learn vocabulary for family and pets. They learn classroom phrases and directions, days of the week and weather expressions.

## **Art**

Students become aesthetically aware. They interpret images and are introduced to colors, shapes, patterns, textures, and an appreciation of beauty and art. At this level children manage tools, compare and contrast artists and their styles, and experience self-expression.

## **Music**

Children experience the basic elements of music through speaking, singing, moving, playing games, and exploring the Orff instruments. Experience in rhythm, melody and harmony are carefully sequenced to provide step-by-step development in both skill and understanding. This exciting experience includes expressing beat in various tempos using body percussion (patting, clapping, stamping, etc.) and reading and writing rhythmic and melodic notation. The children learn to match pitch and sing in tune within a group. Students engage in solfege singing exercises using the Kodaly approach. Students are introduced to basic locomotor and non-locomotor movement,

simple circle dances, line dances, folk dance steps, and vocabulary. Rooms One students participate in the December Winter Concert.

### **Computer/Technology**

A Rooms One student is introduced to basic computer/technology use. Children practice responsible use of technology and learn to start and shut down computers. They open and quit applications, work with windows, icons, and menus. Students communicate about technology using developmentally appropriate and accurate terminology. A Rooms One student is introduced to file and resource management. Children log into the network, as well as find and save files and folders. They print documents and save work in the correct folder. A Rooms One student is introduced to the social and ethical use of technology. They follow rules and procedures for technology use and work cooperatively and collaboratively with others when using technology. In addition, children demonstrate positive social and ethical behaviors when using technology systems and software. A Rooms One student is introduced to word processing. They use word processing for a final draft. A Rooms One student is introduced to graphics and publishing. They create pictures with Paint Program and use drawing tools to create objects. Children also apply good design principles. A Rooms One student is introduced to spreadsheets. They are able to explain what the data represents in an existing spreadsheet and collect data for a new spreadsheet. A Rooms One student is introduced to the Internet. They use teacher-selected web sites, launch a browser and use the tool bar. Children navigate by clicking on links on web pages and return to the site by using back button or bookmark/favorite. In addition, children learn the basics of keyboarding. They use Kid Pix, Print Shop, Apple Works word processing system, the Internet as a tool, Neighborhood Map Machine, and various computer games, which reinforce spelling skills and proper computer usage.

## **Physical Education**

Rooms One activities include: fleeing, dodging and tagging games, ball-handling skills, soccer skills, relay races, base running games, target games, balance activities, net games, track and field activities, basketball skills, T-ball, jump rope skills, fitness stations and circuit training, scooters, parachute play, cooperative activities, and problem solving activities.

Students begin learning how to incorporate physical activity into their lifestyle. They demonstrate competency in many physical activities and proficiency in a few. Children apply movement concepts and principles to the learning and development of movement patterns and skills. They begin learning how to achieve a healthy level of physical fitness, to behave in ways that are personally and socially responsible in physical activity settings and to understand and respect differences among people in physical activity settings. Problem solving skills are introduced in Rooms One.

## **Character Development**

Mirman School adheres to the Character Counts program. Students develop positive self-esteem. They learn to be positive and respectful by showing kindness and consideration towards others.

## **Global Awareness Strand**

Students share cultural customs and traditions. They learn not to judge people by outward appearance. Children learn that there are no limits based on their gender.

## **Library**

The library program is designed to introduce students to literature as well as nonfiction books appropriate to their reading and maturity level and the curricular needs of their classroom. The program is structured to teach the students how to find the books and information they need. Library skills are taught sequentially so that the advanced skills build upon the more basic ones. Besides reading to each class from a variety of books, the librarian teaches specific skills through a “hands-on” approach using methods ranging from games to cooperative projects. Since library skills are used as a way to achieve other goals, such as finding information on a topic for a report or locating a specific book to read for pleasure, the library program is often integrated into the curriculum. The librarian works with the faculty to ascertain curricular needs and suggests appropriate books and topics that enrich the curriculum.

Students in Rooms One are introduced to the idea that books in the library are ordered in a certain way. They learn how to keep books in the correct order and can select books of interest and appropriate level. Children can listen and express the point of a story. They use shelf marks and returns books appropriately. Students know the difference between fiction and nonfiction. They can identify cover, title, author, spine, illustrator, and title page.

## **Rooms Two**

Academically, the Rooms Two children spiral back and review skills taught in Rooms One and then move on to higher levels. Rooms Two work hard to continue the Rooms One curriculum and prepare the students for Rooms Three. Students begin to have homework and keep a homework log. They continue to develop responsibility, independence and confidence. Rooms Two place an enormous emphasis on character development. They learn about values, such as cooperation, courage, courtesy, fairness, generosity, honesty, perseverance, respect, and tolerance.

### **Reading and Literature**

Rooms Two students continue to develop oral and silent reading skills. Emphasis is placed on phonics understanding, which is tied to the spelling curriculum. Children learn comprehension strategies, including how to read for meaning and answer questions using higher-level thinking skills from Bloom's Taxonomy. They learn story structure and elements of different kinds of literature, such as what makes up a folk tale, etc. Students learn and practice dictionary skills. They learn to write in greater depth about stories and books.

### **Language Arts/ Writing**

Rooms Two students develop an understanding of grammar and correct usage. They learn specific rules for forming plurals and possessives, how to punctuate dialogue, how to distinguish between homophones, such as too, to and two and there, their and they're. They learn the parts of speech. With an emphasis on learning to refine drafts, children learn to write more detailed stories, expository essays, poetry, and letters.

## **Spelling**

Students in Rooms Two learn spelling rules and application. They learn how phonics skills can help them to spell correctly in context and how to correct spelling in daily work. They also learn to use the dictionary as a spelling tool.

## **Math**

Students in Rooms Two reinforce and build on concepts learned in Rooms One. They learn about the principles of commutativity and associativity. They explore number patterns to 1,000, including using a hundred chart to determine ten less, ten more and multiples of ten and other numbers. Children learn to collect, organize, compare, and interpret data, creating different types of graphs, tables and charts. They learn about probability and how to predict outcomes. Students work with place value into the thousands. They learn to regroup in addition and subtraction to three or four digits, depending upon the child's abilities. In geometry, students review two-dimensional objects and are introduced to three-dimensional objects. They learn to calculate perimeter and area of quadrilaterals. Children study the concepts of symmetry and congruence. As a preparation for algebra, students solve simple equations. They are taught and apply critical thinking techniques to solve problems in logic. They study measurement, learning to estimate and check measurements of distance, weight, and liquid. Children continue to learn to read an analog clock and are introduced to elapsed time. They learn about money, specifically coin recognition and how to make change. Students reinforce their mastery of basic addition and subtraction facts to twenty, plus multiplication and division facts through twelve. They learn to multiply 2 digits by one digit, and to divide 2 digit dividends by 1-digit divisors.

## **Science**

Students learn the steps of the Scientific Method and practice the steps within the curriculum. They develop an appreciation for all varieties of living organisms and learn the characteristics of environments by studying land formations, weather and living organisms of various environments. Children learn to use science-related technologies like microscopes and computers to enhance a given study.

## **Social Studies**

Students develop map and globe skills. They compare the use of both and explore different kinds of maps. Students learn to read maps using a compass rose, a legend, and latitude and longitude lines to create their own maps. They learn about United States regions and how a region affects the culture of the area. They study biographies of famous people and timelines of history. All Mirman school children are introduced to the continent of Asia through interdisciplinary activities during the 2008-2009 school year.

## **Spanish**

Students respond to simple questions, point to objects and use manipulatives or gestures to demonstrate an understanding of verbal clues. They integrate vocabulary words into games and classroom activities. Students are able to recognize colors and to correctly apply the target words to other class activities. They listen to culturally authentic songs and stories that depict cultural practices and products. Children recognize the months of the year and weather expressions. They recognize the vocabulary of professions as well as classroom and backpack vocabulary. Rooms Two students apply these words to other class activities.

## **Art**

Students are introduced to the basic concepts and vocabulary of art, and they build foundation skills. They continue to develop the skills necessary for cutting, gluing, folding, and the correct placement of objects. They further explore the use of texture in artwork, including combining art media. Children continue to develop printing skills and further develop basic drawing skills in order to be able to produce landscapes, portraits, still lifes, and non-objective art, and to be able to categorize these art forms correctly. At this level students understand and are able to use hot and cool colors and are able to make imaginative use of color in a composition. They learn the concept of tint and are able to produce tints in paint and chalk. Students learn the double-loading technique of blending colors in paint and employ the concepts of positive and negative space and contrast. They develop the ability to work in three-dimensions in various media including clay and paper. In addition, children learn to use overlapping in composition to achieve the illusion of three-dimensional space. They learn to further understand and employ the concept of symmetry and learn mix media in artistic composition.

## **Music**

Children continue to solidify their sense of beat and pitch and are ready for more sophisticated Orff orchestration. Rhymes, poetry and folk songs provide text for musical improvisation. During the year the students begin to sing simple canons. More advanced combinations of rhythmic and melodic patterns are introduced. Continued progress in the area of 'keeping the beat' to music is used in circle games stressing hand-eye coordination, both with and without instruments, while singing songs. Examples of classical as well as more contemporary music are used in class to enhance the students' understanding of composers and concepts. The students review locomotor and non-locomotor movement and continue to explore

opportunities for creative and expressive movement. Rooms Two students participate in the December Winter Concert.

### **Computer/Technology**

Rooms Two students refine skills established in Rooms One. File and resource management skills allow students at this level to describe hardware and software problems. Keyboarding includes the use of proper posture and ergonomics. Children locate and use letter and number keys with correct left and right hand placement. They use the correct finger of the correct hand for space bar, return and shift key. Word processing skills include the use of the word processor from first to final draft. Graphics and publishing skills include the use of cut, copy, paste, and print tools in graphic programs. Students insert graphics within an application. Spreadsheet skills incorporate the ability to add data to an existing spreadsheet, format text and create graphs. Presentation tools include text and graphics in presentations, as well as adding transitions and sounds to presentations. Children are able to add bookmarks/favorites on the Internet. At this level programming skills allow students to write simple procedures to control the Logo turtle.

The Rooms Two students continue to learn various word processing skills; learn proper keyboarding techniques; develop spreadsheets; learn various graphic design strategies using Kid Pix; learn basic Internet functions and learn to use search engines.

### **Physical Education**

Rooms Two activities include: fleeing, dodging and tagging games, ball-handling skills, soccer skills, relay races, base-running games, target games, balance activities, net games, track and field, basketball skills, jump rope, fitness stations and circuit training, scooters, T-ball, parachute play, and cooperative activities.

Students continue to develop the knowledge, skill and attitude necessary to become physically educated people. They demonstrate competency in many physical activities and proficiency in a few. Students apply movement concepts and principles to the learning and development of new movement patterns and skills. They achieve and maintain a health-enhancing level of physical fitness and behave in ways that are personally and socially responsible in physical activity settings. Children understand and respect differences among people in physical activity settings, and understand that physical activity can provide enjoyment, challenge, self-expression, and social interaction.

### **Character Development**

Mirman School adheres to the Character Counts program. Students in Rooms Two develop an understanding and practice of specific values: caring, citizenship, cooperation, fairness, friendship, generosity, honesty, kindness, loyalty, perseverance, respect, responsibility, and tolerance. Children are encouraged to analyze behaviors in the content of these values. They also learn about actions and consequences, both good and bad.

### **Global Awareness Strand**

Students learn to appreciate and embrace differences in cultures. They learn about other religions, holidays, celebrations, and customs. Children understand and recognize our similarities and realize how much we are alike. They learn about famous people in history who represent other cultures and/or fight/fought for civil rights for all people.

### **Library**

Rooms Two students learn specific skills. They know that picture books and fiction books in the library are in alphabetical order and can find books on a certain topic with help. Children

can select books of interest and at an appropriate level. They know the function of spine labels.

## **Rooms Three**

In Rooms Three students develop and practice skills to become independent learners. They work to extend their sense of responsibility. At this level children continue developing social and emotional skills in tandem with their academics.

Multiculturalism and diversity with a strong emphasis on equality and justice are integrated into all academic areas. Students acquire an understanding of and an interest in world cultures and develop a sensitivity to and appreciation for diversity. The Global Celebration is a major event planned to integrate all aspects of Rooms Three curriculum.

In Rooms Three students continue to build on and improve positive self-concepts. Throughout the year the students arrive in the morning with much anticipation and curiosity concerning the day's lessons. They take pride in their academics and are proud of their scholarly achievements. Every day is an opportunity for social and academic growth that celebrates each student's similarities as well as differences.

### **Reading and Literature**

Students increase proficiency in reading comprehension. Students' reading comprehension increases as they identify inferences, work with words and learn to follow directions. Additionally, children learn to use words in context, locate the answer, and determine the main idea and supporting facts. Students draw conclusions and are able to determine the sequence of events. They improve in their ability to work in a group and take part in presentations.

### **Language Arts/ Writing**

Students develop knowledge and awareness of descriptive, expository, narrative, and persuasive writing. They understand cause and effect relationships, synonyms, antonyms,

personification, metaphors, and similes. Students continue to improve their ability to use a thesaurus and dictionary. They expand their vocabulary and improve their editing skills, including grammar, capitalization, punctuation, and standard usage. Rooms Three students understand basic outlining, note taking and research skills.

### **Spelling**

Students explore language development in the writing process. They do this in cooperative learning environments, as well as individually in order to further their spellings skills.

### **Math**

Students become more familiar with concepts of time, money, measurement, fractions, place value, and estimation. They work with 3-digit addition and subtraction, multiplication and division. Students learn the basics of algebra. They take part in a more in-depth study of geometry. At this level students learn to find perimeter, area and volume. They concentrate on problem solving skills and strategies.

### **Science**

Students continue to employ the steps of the Scientific Method within the curriculum. They also develop an appreciation for all varieties of living organisms. In order to identify characteristics of the environments, they study land formations, weather and the living organisms. Students learn to use science-related technologies like microscopes and computers to enhance a given study. They learn the basic physics of matter and begin to look further at how the human body functions. Children examine the basics of energy transference, germs and their effect on the human body. Finally, Rooms Three students study the circulatory system and learn the basics of protection from the sun.

## **Social Studies**

Students gain an awareness and understanding of the concepts of profit and loss, division of labor, entrepreneurship, business, and decision-making. They employ word-processing and research skills. Students study map and map making as part of their geographic studies. They learn to gather data and graph it. Leadership and social skills are fostered. All Mirman school children are introduced to the continent of Asia through interdisciplinary activities during the 2008-2009 school year.

## **Spanish**

Students respond to simple questions. They point to objects and use manipulatives or gestures to demonstrate an understanding of verbal clues. Students integrate vocabulary words into games and classroom activities. They learn and understand classroom and school objects. In addition, children learn and understand food, meals and time. They learn and understand vocabulary relating to city, town, nature, and Los Angeles.

## **Art**

In Rooms Three the basic concepts and vocabulary of art and foundation skills are reinforced. Students learn relief and block printing as well as the concepts of foreground, middle ground and background. They are able to employ these concepts in producing landscape compositions. Additionally, they learn the basic techniques of watercolor. Children learn to create the illusion of volume with proper shading techniques and are able to produce representations of objects from different or unusual points of view. They further develop the ability to work in three-dimensional form in various media, including clay and paper. Students are able to use color in an expressionistic manner. They learn artistic lettering and further understand and employ the concept of symmetry. Rooms Three students further explore the use of texture in artwork, including

combining art media and sandpaper monoprints. They are able to produce compositions with one-point perspective.

### **Creative Dramatics**

The Creative Dramatics program was established to help students develop performance skills and provide a venue for self-expression. Through the use of improvisation and movement, they develop skills in problem solving, characterization and story telling. They learn the importance of concentration and focusing on completing a task. Students gain the ability to create an environment and transform ordinary objects into extraordinary ones. In addition, they develop imagination and a heightened creativity. Finally, students learn how to work as a team, and in so doing, learn more about themselves.

In Rooms Three students begin to focus on making the imaginary, a reality. They learn how to place themselves in an unfamiliar environment and respond to unfamiliar situations. At this level they also delve into creative problem solving and movement is introduced. The movement exercises help them to accomplish a specific objective. Concentration skills and spontaneously reacting to stimuli are reinforced. Even the most reserved students get a chance to express themselves physically and become less inhibited. Through their creativity and imagination, students learn they have the power to succeed.

### **Music**

Enjoyment, confidence and discipline are reinforced. Singing in unison, solo singing and simple harmonic parts and canons are used to enhance the Rooms Three curriculum. The Kodaly approach continues to be used to improve their abilities. Rooms Three is the center of the Lower School music program and extends the use of the basic skills and understanding to higher degrees of sophistication. Instrumentally, the students learn to

play simple songs on the recorder. More advanced rhythmic and melodic patterns are introduced, using Orff and other instruments. Music of all styles and eras from North America and from around the world are incorporated into the program. Students study various composers and the timbres of instruments used in their compositions. The students in Rooms Three continue to be expressive in their movements, with and without props. Students choreograph small group pieces, review dances from Rooms Two, learn more difficult steps, and remember and perform dances independent of the teacher. The Room Three students perform in the December Winter Concert.

### **Computer/Technology**

Students in Rooms Three refine skills established in Rooms One and Two. In regards to the social and ethical use of technology and information, they demonstrate and advocate for legal and ethical behaviors among peers, family and community. Keyboarding skills include being able to key the entire alphabetic keyboard by touch using the correct fingers of the correct hand. Word processing skills include being able to use the ruler, margins and tabs and to insert page breaks. At this level children apply knowledge of graphics and publishing when they capture images from the Internet; import and modify images; rotate, duplicate, align, and resize objects; follow copyright laws for use of images; and use text objects in draw mode. Presentation tools include the ability to determine target audience, goal, and purpose of presentation; to use storyboards and mind-mapping software to brainstorm and plan presentations, and to use animation and video. In addition, spreadsheet skills include the ability to collect, input, analyze, organize, and display data graphically; to add and format appropriate labels and legends; to format and change axis scale, chart area, data series, or appearance of charts. When on the Internet, students can use keyboard and natural language searches. When programming, students write procedures with a repeat command, including color and animation in procedures. They continue to learn

various word processing skills; to have proper keyboarding techniques reinforced; to develop spreadsheets; and to improve upon various graphic design strategies using Kid Pix. In Rooms Three students continue to use the Internet and various search engines and learn the basics of PhotoShop.

### **Physical Education**

Rooms Three activities include continued learning and practice of: fleeing, dodging and tagging games, soccer skills, relay races, base-running games, target games, balance activities, net games, track and field, basketball skills, jump rope, fitness stations and circuit training, and scooters. Baseball, hockey skills and cooperative games are introduced.

Students continue to demonstrate competency in many physical activities and proficiency in a few. They apply movement concepts and principles to the learning and development of movement patterns and skills. Children exhibit a physically active lifestyle and achieve and maintain a health-enhancing level of physical fitness. They behave in ways that are personally and socially responsible in physical activity settings and understand and respect differences among people in physical activity settings.

### **Character Development**

Mirman School adheres to the Character Counts program. Students identify and embrace their personal characteristics, preferences, interests, and beliefs. In Room Three they are able to recognize commonalities and differences among themselves and consider and understand their own unique traits and interests.

## **Global Awareness Strand**

Students learn to appreciate and understand the writing, reading and communication techniques of various cultures. They integrate cooperative learning and their studies culminate in a written multicultural report.

## **Library**

Specific skills at Rooms Three level include the ability to use the Patron Catalog using the title, author or keyword search. They know that the call number indicates the location of the book and that the Dewey Decimal system has ten general categories by subject. Students become more familiar with the basic reference books: encyclopedia, atlas and dictionary. They know that fiction books have various 'genres' and are able to describe the basic differences. In addition, students understand that information on various topics can be found in reference books, subject books and on the Internet.

## **Rooms Four**

Rooms Four emphasize organizational skills, discovery, increased self-confidence, and creativity. The formula for success in Rooms Four is Responsibility + Respect + Perseverance = Success. These themes are integrated into all aspects of academic and social life in Rooms Fours.

Responsibility is emphasized in connection to organizational skills and time management. Students learn to assemble and maintain a binder categorized by subject. They receive a weekly homework sheet with accompanying lessons in time management. Cooperation is encouraged through numerous small group activities across the curriculum. Respect is highlighted through multicultural education units in literature and social studies, as well as through attention to respectful social dynamics with peers and adults. Perseverance is encouraged throughout the year, as students are guided through a variety of long-term projects across the curriculum.

Guidelines, class lessons and work time in class are part of the implementation of these projects. There are many field trips throughout the year connected to various components of the curriculum. These field trips provide opportunities to practice the Rooms Four formula for success outside the school.

## **Reading and Literature**

The literature component includes the study of such genres as folktales, fantasy, historical fiction, poetry, biographies, and fiction that reflects diversity. Within these genre studies, students' reading is individualized to meet their needs. The following elements are aspects of the Rooms Four reading and literature curriculum.

Students increase oral fluency through specific lessons in expression, emphasis, characterization, articulation, and dramatic lessons in expression, emphasis, characterization, articulation, dramatic pauses, and pacing. They increase silent reading

fluency by practicing silent sustained reading. In these lessons, emphasis is on multiple strategies to unlock meaning and make connections between the reader and the text; recognition of literary stylistic devices such as simile, metaphor, personification, onomatopoeia, varied sentence structure, and dialog as a means of character and plot development. They are taught to recognize story archetypes. They do projects that use visual arts, as well as dramatize works of literature through such activities as storytelling, skits and character portrayals. Students engage in activities meant to increase their ability to judge and discriminate among works of literature based on an author's style, as well as plot/character/setting and theme within a text. They practice discussion of literature utilizing literary language, demonstrate ability to write about literature utilizing the language of literary elements and learn to set reading goals.

### **Language Arts/ Writing**

Students explore and practice writing on a daily basis. Writing as a means of self-expression and information sharing is used across the curriculum. Students are taught the steps of the writing process: prewriting, drafting, conferencing, revising, editing, rewriting, and publishing. Lessons in writing workshop are presented which are designed to facilitate students in the development of their own voice as writers and provide strategies for students to implement each step of the writing process. Students are guided to become more fluent and self-confident writers with respect to organizing their thoughts and expressing themselves. They continue to recognize that writing means revising and rewriting. As a culminating project in the spring, students create their own poetry anthology. Publishing is done in-house in the classroom and in the school literary journal. Student work is also submitted to various venues for consideration for publication outside the school.

## **Spelling**

Students in Rooms Four have a diversified spelling program. They take part in lessons from a spelling text that builds spelling skills while integrating vocabulary and language arts lessons. The spelling approach is curriculum based. Words from social studies, reading and language art units are incorporated into the weekly spelling list.

## **Math**

Students in Rooms Four review place value and money, addition, and subtraction. They work with units on multiplication of whole numbers, division by 1 and 2 digit divisors, fractions and mixed numbers. In addition, students cover metric and standard measurement, decimals, algebra, logic, graphing, geometry, statistics, and probability. Problem solving is integrated within all units of study. Specific strategies for solving problems such as draw a picture, make a chart, find a pattern, and working backwards are taught and applied.

## **Science**

Students continue to employ the steps of the Scientific Method within the curriculum and to develop an appreciation for all varieties of living organisms. Children learn the characteristics of environments characterized by dry land formations and ocean life. They learn how to use science-related technologies like microscopes and computers to enhance a given study. At this level they learn the basic physics of matter. Rooms Four students begin to look further at how the human body functions with focus on the endocrine system and the immune system. Further, they learn the basics of forensic studies.

## **Social Studies**

A cultural approach is taken to the study of California history. The units in California history that are studied include Native Americans of California, European explorers, Spanish missions and presidios. Students examine Mexican California including ranchos and pueblos. In addition, they study the Westward Movement, the Gold Rush and statehood. Children learn about the Transcontinental Railroad and California government today. Additional units of study integrated into California history are African American studies and a unit on family heritage. As a culmination to the study of California, Rooms Four travel to Sacramento. This enriching field trip is a highlight of the year for teachers and students alike. All Mirman School children are introduced to the continent of Asia through interdisciplinary activities during the 2008-2009 school year.

## **Spanish**

Students respond to simple questions, point to objects and use manipulatives or gestures to demonstrate an understanding of verbal clues. They integrate vocabulary words into games and classroom activities. Children learn and understand vocabulary for the family, food and restaurant, currency, Latin American countries, and sports. Students learn the verbs -to be and -to like.

## **Art**

In Rooms Four students master the basic artistic elements of line, shape, color, space, form, and texture as demonstrated by both traditional and contemporary masters. They learn to use an impressionistic style line on top of a body – mind watercolor and learn to use calligraphic line over basic watercolor wash compositions. Children are able to draw complex objects from life, to produce the illusion of two-dimensions in compositions by overlapping drawn objects, tinting, for atmospheric

perspective and proper use of shading. In addition, students produce optical illusions on paper and compositions with two-point perspective. They master techniques of color blending, understand the strength of primary, secondary and intermediate colors, tints and shades, warm vs. cool colors, and their mutations or varieties. Children become familiar with art from Impressionistic, Post-Impressionistic and the Expressionistic Periods. Further, they understand art in a historical context and use colors in an Expressionistic manner. Rooms Four students understand and produce abstract or realistic works, which communicate different moods; they also learn techniques of Western Native American art.

### **Creative Dramatics**

In Rooms Four students work on making the imaginary a reality. Children create imaginary objects through pantomime and learn to communicate these objects to their classmates. They learn how to take these objects and use them to communicate their location. We call these “wheres,” and students show us where they are. Additionally, they begin to explore characters or “whos.” Students learn to show, not to tell. Through this pantomime of imaginary characters, objects and places, children develop confidence and a strong sense of self. They have fun in the process and learn that theatre is a place where they can express themselves freely.

### **Music**

In Rooms Four emphasis shifts to incorporate more formal music training. The students begin instruction on the violin. The children also attend one Orff/Kodaly class per week. At this age, some of the best ensemble music is possible for the children’s skills are highly developed. The students continue expressive movement, with and without props, and dances are reviewed at higher levels of complexity. There is continued independence in in-group dancing. Performance opportunities

include performing in the December Winter Concert and Spring Instrumental Music Concert.

### **Violin Program**

All Rooms Four students take part in an introduction to violin. They not only develop a practical and aesthetic appreciation for this versatile and expressive instrument but also gain a sense of accomplishment based on the value of persistence and organization in mastering multi-step problems. Violin fundamentals are taught to instill good habits from the very beginning. Students take their violins home on alternate weekends in order to reinforce skills learned in class. Violin basics, dynamics and ensemble playing are reinforced with musical games as new material is learned. There are several opportunities to perform both on and off-campus.

### **Computer/Technology**

Rooms Four students refine skills established in Rooms One, Two and Three. When it comes to file and resource management, students organize folders for work in progress and final drafts in an organized system and share files over the network. Their social and ethical awareness allows them to follow proper use of copyright material and to cite resources properly. Children “Touch-type” 10 words per minute. Rooms Four students continue to learn various word processing skills, develop spreadsheets and improve upon various graphic design strategies using Kid Pix. They continue using the Internet and various search engines and improve upon skills learned in PhotoShop. Their graphic and publishing skills allow them to use a digital camera and know the difference between draw and paint. Additionally, spreadsheet skills include the ability to use simple formats, use the appropriate chart for activity and data, and add and format appropriate labels and legends. Students in Rooms Four know the educational uses of databases. They use existing databases (e.g. card catalog) and also know terms such as

records and fields. Further, they can find and sort information in a database. When it comes to the Internet, students use teacher-selected web sites, launch a browser and use the tool bar. They navigate by clicking on links on web pages and return to the site using back buttons or bookmark/favorite. At this level, students add bookmarks / favorites. In programming children write super procedures including one or more subprocedures. Robotics allow students to understand differences and similarities among robots, to learn how to attach motors and wires to a RCX programmable brick. Students are able to use on-off, run and program buttons, as well as use output ports. They use touch and light sensors to control motors and build a car model. Additionally, they use built-in programs to run the car and use an on-line tutorial to learn how to program the RCX brick.

### **Physical Education**

Some of the continued activities in Rooms Four include: fleeing, dodging and tagging games, soccer skills, relay races, base running games, target games, balance activities, net games, track and field, basketball skills, jump rope, fitness stations and circuit training, scooters, baseball, hockey skills, cooperative games, and football skills.

Students continue to demonstrate competency in many physical activities and proficiency in a few. They apply movement concepts and principles to the learning and development of movement of new patterns and skills. Students exhibit a physically active lifestyle. They achieve and maintain a health-enhancing level of physical fitness and behave in ways that are personally and socially responsible in physical activity settings.

## **Character Development**

Mirman School adheres to the Character Counts program. Students set reasonable personal goals. They reflect on interactions with peers and build on the positive, practice 1-3-10, a technique for mastering self-control. Students practice responsibility, cooperation, respect, fairness, analysis of a problem situation, and demonstrate the willingness to persevere on long-term projects.

## **Global Awareness Strand**

Students explore diversity through literature and art. They examine the cultures of groups of people who have impacted the history of California. Students recognize and honor their own cultural heritages and those of their classmates.

## **Library**

Students in Rooms Four acquire specific skills. They know the Patron Catalog is the index to the library collection and understand the Dewey Decimal System pulls together material by subject in ten categories. Students evaluate plots and discuss themes of books. Children use the library to begin research on specific topics, and find books by title, author and subject. Further, students locate nonfiction books by call numbers and relate plots and themes of books to their own experience.

## **Rooms Five**

In the transitional year from Lower School to Upper School, a primary goal for Rooms Five students is to learn the fine art of organization, time management and independence so that they will be prepared for the demands of the Upper School. To assist in their development and preparation, the students use Day Minders for the first time. They also continue to utilize binders to organize and categorize their papers in the various subjects. The students are given complete rubrics and guidelines for all major projects. However, there is less teacher monitoring of student progress on long-term assignments so that the children can develop the time management skills necessary to plan and complete larger assignments independently. As the students enter this adolescent stage of life, the academic curriculum emphasizes more leadership skills and a sense of autonomy in their schoolwork. This is reflected in such projects as the student-led and directed Literary Society unit and the Rooms Five newspaper, The Rooms Five FYI. The writing program stresses the importance of structure and organization in nonfiction writing for the FYI, as well as the numerous literary essays the children write throughout the year.

## **Reading and Literature**

Rooms Five students develop a joy for literature and the reading process. Over the course of the year, students independently read several different literary genres. Various types of fiction are stressed and different sources of nonfiction are introduced. Through classroom instruction students learn character analysis, recognize literary devices, understand plot development, identify genre characteristics, and develop an eye for quality writing through a study of award winning literature. Vocabulary growth and comprehension skills are taught through activities in the reading course and are integrated across the curriculum.

## **Language Arts/Writing**

A Room Five student practices both creative and expository writing. Children effectively apply literary devices such as simile, metaphor and personification in poetry and hone skills in character and plot development, tone, and sense of voice in creative writing. Students take notes, outline and use reference tools in research-based papers and comfortably write five paragraph expository essays. All students are expected to proficiently edit their own work, revise and publish work within specific deadlines. Children are expected to word process at 50 words per minute by year-end.

## **Spelling**

Rooms Five students study spelling using the research based theories of Dr. Bradley Loomer, PhD. They apply visual memory methods while learning the 220 most frequently misspelled words in the English language. In addition, children who pass the pretest each week are challenged with SAT level vocabulary words. There are multi-levels of participation from learning the meaning of the words to spelling the words and using them in writing.

## **Math**

Rooms Five students continue to refine skills established in Rooms One through Four as well as learn new skills. Students master the addition of three numbers, decimals, negative numbers, estimation and rounding, subtraction across zeros, multiplication of 4-digit numbers, division up to 4-digits, place value up to billions, fractions (including improper, addition, subtraction, multiplication and division of), geometry, time, money, graphing, ratios, proportion, percents, probability, and word problems incorporating all skills.

## **Science**

Rooms Five students refine their practice of the Scientific Method within the curriculum. They continue to develop an appreciation for all varieties of living organisms. Students learn kingdoms 1-3 of living organisms (bacteria, protist, fungi) and learn the plant and animal kingdoms. Children develop a basic understanding of chemistry (Periodic Table and elements, subatomic particles, acids and bases); and continue to develop a better understanding of the human body by learning about the nervous system and the reproductive system. At this level students develop an appreciation and understanding of the importance of making responsible choices about their bodies.

## **Social Studies**

In social studies Rooms Five students learn to respect all cultures as they explore the concept of immigration and the Colonial American era. They develop a joy for history and geography. Students understand mapping concepts such as latitude and longitude, cardinal directions, keys, legends, and scale. They are able to recognize all fifty states and capitals. Rooms Five students study election history and current issues in election years. All Mirman school children are introduced to the continent of Asia through interdisciplinary activities during the 2008-2009 school year.

## **Spanish**

Students respond to simple questions and point to objects. They use manipulatives or gestures to demonstrate an understanding of verbal clues. Children integrate vocabulary words into games and classroom activities. They learn and understand vocabulary for all K-5 concepts and know all previously taught grammar concepts in addition to affirmative extension on interrogative and negative forms. Further, students learn "ser" and "estar"

conjugations in the present tense. They learn to conjugate with -ar -er -ir endings in the present tense.

## **Art**

Students continue to enhance artistic skills and techniques previously developed. They become familiar with art from western and non-western cultures and are able to draw familiar objects from memory. Children are able to produce compositions with three-point perspective. They learn characteristics and/or techniques associated with the following art forms: prehistoric cave drawings, ancient Egypt sculpture, Chinese brush painting, Persian miniatures, Chiaroscuro portraits, impasto paintings, abstract Cubistic paintings, surrealist composition, realistic expressive drawings, block sculpture figures, African 3-D mask, Latin American hexa-flexagons, Metatepec ceramics, Indonesian shadow puppets, Japanese block prints, and Islamic geometric design. At this level children are able to produce artwork in these styles and become familiar with art as scientific illustration, genre painting, documentary art, folk art, and social message.

## **Creative Dramatics**

In Rooms Five the focus is on spontaneity. Through various games and exercises, students are encouraged to react spontaneously to sensory images such as sounds, words, environments, characters, and plot. They learn to take risks and trust each other to feel safe doing whatever comes into their minds. Children delve into story structure and create imaginative, vibrant team-based stories. Once they are free enough to react in this way, the skills can be applied on and off the stage. At the end of the year, students begin to work with text, and they culminate their Lower School experience with a multicultural theatrical performance.

## **Music**

All students in Rooms Five participate in the Mustang Chorus. This chorus is designed for the beginning singer. Singing skills such as healthy tone production, accuracy of pitch and blending are introduced along with basic sight singing and theory. The children learn to perform and appreciate music in a variety of styles. Performances include participation in the December Winter Concert, Diadames luncheon, Spring Pops Concert, Grandparents' Day, and Graduation.

## **Computer/Technology**

Rooms Five students refine skills established in Rooms Ones, Twos, Threes, and Fours. Basic computer and technology use allows students to discuss advantages and disadvantages of using technology in daily life. Additionally, children apply strategies for identifying and solving routine hardware and software problems. They make informed decisions in choosing the most appropriate technology systems, resources and services. When it comes to files and resource management, students save work in various formats and add correct extensions to file names. Social and ethical use is considered. At this level students demonstrate knowledge of current changes in information technologies and the effect that changes have on the workplace and society. Children exhibit legal and ethical behaviors when using information and technology and discuss consequences of misuse. They demonstrate advances for legal and ethical behaviors among peers, family, and community regarding the use of technology and information. Students "Touch-type" 40 words per minute by the end of the year. Word processing skills include being able to wrap text around a graphic, use ruler, margins and tabs, as well as insert sections, columns and page breaks. They create and format tables. Students use image editing software, work with selection tools and with layers. They create special effects and save images in different formats as part of their graphics and publishing skills. Database ability involves

knowing the uses of databases, using existing databases (e.g. card catalog), knowing terms such as records and fields, and also finding and sorting information in databases. Rooms Five students use variables, recursion, conditional structures – stop rules, and iterative loop structures in programming. In addition, their robotic skills allow them to build a merry-go-round and write a multi-step program to run the merry-go-round for a complete ride sequence. They use problem solving and programming skills to improve on the design. Students continue to learn various word processing skills and develop spreadsheets. They use the Internet as a main research tool and better understand PhotoShop. Further, children learn Inspiration and Simulation. They develop basic skills for PowerPoint and use MicroWorlds as a programming tool. Finally, they are introduced to Tessellmania for computer generated tessellations.

### **Physical Education**

The Physical Education program combines both Rooms Five. They are sub-divided into three groups of sixteen students, rotating every two weeks to a new activity.

The units covered in Rooms Five are: basketball, hockey, football, fitness conditioning and testing, diamond games, dodge ball games, track & field, volleyball, soccer, misc. games to end the year. Students are also given the opportunity to participate in after school athletics: boys' basketball and soccer; girls' basketball and volleyball.

Students continue to demonstrate competency in many physical activities and proficiency in a few. They achieve and maintain a health-enhancing level of physical fitness and behave in ways that are personally and socially responsible in physical activity settings. Children understand and respect differences among people in physical activity settings.

## **Character Development**

Mirman School adheres to the Character Counts program. Students self-evaluate and set goals. They interact with peers in a compassionate and humane way while transitioning into adolescence. Students define traits such as empathy, tolerance, accountability, etc. They recognize these traits in self and others and foster their development. Room Five students properly use organizational tools such as daily planner, binder and folders.

## **Global Awareness Strand**

Rooms Five students continue to study and have an appreciation for all the cultures of the world. They explore and learn about other cultures and religions around the world, developing an openness for people of all cultures and religions. Their exposure to a variety of cultures informs them, so they can integrate positive aspects of the cultures (creativity, values) into their own being. Children also learn to interact with peers on group projects and present information orally to a group; they reflect and write about societal and cultural issues.

## **Library**

Specific skills at Rooms Five level include being able to determine the most appropriate reference source for a specific purpose. Students find information on a specific topic and use it in a report. They paraphrase and do a simple outline and bibliography. Children use the Dictionary of Famous Quotations and the almanac.



## **ABOUT THE CURRICULUM GUIDE**

The Mirman School Curriculum Guide is designed as an informational resource for parents, students, prospective parents, and prospective students. The programs of study delineated in this guide present a baseline of academic opportunities, not a ceiling for possible academic achievement at any educational level. Consistent with the philosophy of Mirman School, all teachers and administrators remain committed to providing all students the academic and intellectual engagement and instruction they need, as their academic performance and/or the professional evaluation of their teachers warrant.

## **UPPER SCHOOL COURSE OF STUDY**

Mirman School is divided into two educational divisions: the Lower School and the Upper School. The Lower School curriculum is comparable to grades 1 through 5; the Upper School's curriculum is comparable to four years of middle school, grades 6 through 9. US1, US2, US3, and US4 designate the levels of the student academic community in the Upper School. The US4 students are referred to as "seniors" and enjoy certain privileges as a result of their tenure and projected graduation from the school. Only US4 students can graduate and receive a diploma from Mirman School. Any student in the Upper School, however, who successfully completes the academic program of Mirman School up to and through the year in which they and their families decide that the curricular offerings at other middle or secondary schools might better meet their developmental and educational needs, may matriculate from the school. They receive a Certificate of Matriculation with the support of teachers and administrators. Students generally "apply out" of the Upper School during US2 or US4. These students may place into other institutions in a range of grades

from 7<sup>th</sup> to early college admission, depending on their developmental readiness and curricular achievement.

The demonstration of a willingness to pursue academic excellence, positive interest and involvement in the learning process, and a commitment to academic integrity are important for the continuance of a student's studies. In addition to these academic expectations are the assumptions that all students demonstrate an attitude of respect and act in accordance with the rules of conduct established by each teacher in his/her classes.

The following are full-year requirements in US1 through US4. Classes in these subjects meet four times a week:

- English
- History
- Mathematics
- Physical Education
- Science
- World Languages

Semester requirements (some are rotational); additional classes in these areas may be taken as electives or expanded during LEAP:

- Art
- Choral and/or Instrumental Music
- Theatre Arts

Other Requirements:

- LEAP (one day per a week)
- Computer Technology (offered in US 2, as an elective and integrated throughout)
- Elective Classes (graded, yearlong, one 4-day elective or two 2-day electives)

- Human Development (US3 and US4, graded, 1 day per week for one semester)
- Advisory Groups (yearlong, 1 period per week)

The following are diploma requirements in grades US1-4:

- English – 4 years
- Social Studies – 4 years
- Mathematics – 4 years
- World Languages – 4 years
- Science – 4 years
- Visual Arts - 4 semesters
- Performance Arts – 3 to 4 semesters Theatre; 1 year music
- Physical Education – 4 years
- Community Service – 4 years
- School Service – 4 years
- Human Development – 2 semesters
- Participation in Advisory Group (4 years)

Completion of all requirements is necessary for receipt of all diplomas and final transcripts.

## Service Requirements:

- School Service

All Upper School students are expected to perform 3 hours annually in service to the school. Such service includes helpful tasks such as stuffing envelopes for the Office of Admissions, working in the Front Office, assisting at the Friday morning Global Buddies recycling program, and helping at the Annual Spring Fair, among others.

- Community Service

By encouraging a tradition of service to the community, Mirman School hopes to foster in our students a dedication to improving our surroundings. Completion of this requirement is noted on the student's transcript when applying out and is reviewed by other schools.

- First and Second Year

US1 and US2 students are expected to perform 5 hours of service in the extended community annually. Examples include participation in such organizations as "One Voice," local religious institutions, Heal the Bay, the Revlon Run/Walk, or "Big Sunday."

- Third and Fourth Year

US3 and US4 students are expected to perform 8 hours of service in the extended community annually.

School and Community Service totals carry over from year to year.

- Senior Service

Each year, the Upper School seniors are afforded the opportunity to work in a Lower School classroom where they serve as mentors and classroom aides. Traditionally, seniors participate in the curriculum by helping students with their class work, reading and other tasks.

Completion of all service requirements is necessary for receipt of a diploma and a final transcript.

## Learning Enhancement and Achievement Program: **LEAP**

LEAP or Learning Enhancement and Achievement Program was developed as an opportunity for Mirman School's highly gifted students to reach their unlimited academic potentials. In keeping with gifted literature, it was designed to answer the highly gifted child's need (1) for the time to work on projects of their own creation, (2) in longer periods of time and (3) in an independent manner. LEAP is an opportunity for students to plan their own schedule one day a week. Working with teachers as mentors, they engage in individual or small group learning. Each Wednesday students explore special interests, take advantage of independent study time, perform research and improve research skills, work for extended periods of time on projects of their own choosing, or meet for individual student-teacher conferences. In addition, children can employ LEAP time to make up work or a test missed due to an absence. It can allow time for quiet reflection and thought as well as allow for a small group to work together on a joint project. It is a defining program of the Mirman Upper School.

The program is introduced in the early weeks of the school year and students "practice" the program before it is fully implemented. Responsible use of LEAP is both an obligation and an identifying characteristic of a successful Upper School student.

## Upper School

### I. Art

#### Art I

Students improve drawing skills using right brain drawing techniques. They increase the realism of their drawings as they learn pure and modified contour drawing. At the same time, children explore their own identity during a self-portrait unit. They identify and experiment with a variety of materials, techniques, processes, and technology. At this level students know and use appropriate art vocabulary. Students study different artists and their techniques that relate to the classroom projects.

#### Art II

Students develop an appreciation for and an understanding of art as a form of communication. They are able to discern the mood communicated by artwork and are able to communicate moods through artwork. Students understand art as a reflection of society. They master the different painting techniques for different media and are able to produce artistically mature painting. At this level, children discover if they are a more logical or body-minded (non-objective) painter. During Second Year they identify and experiment with a variety of materials, techniques, processes, and technology. Students analyze and evaluate the selection and use of materials, techniques, processes, and technology. They are able to demonstrate the ability to properly mix paint; to understand the concept of color theory that colors are used to symbolize something or create a mood and to understand the five basic color schemes (triadic, complementary, split complementary, analogous, and monochromatic). Students are able to use these color schemes and identify these color schemes in artwork. Finally, they study different artists and their techniques as they relate to the classroom projects.

### **Art III**

Students accurately describe and criticize sculptures. They create a sculpture using a subtractive and an additive technique. Children understand that the additive method refers to building up or adding material to create a form, and that the subtractive method refers to carving or taking away from the material to create a form. At this level students develop critical thinking skills in planning the design and creation of artwork. They understand the different techniques in clay, wood, paper, and soldering. In addition, they demonstrate appropriate and safe use of art materials and techniques. Students identify eye level, vanishing points, converging tones, receding surfaces, height, width, and depth in 3-point perspective. They also identify and create works with simulated and real texture. Students study different artists and their techniques that relate to the classroom projects.

### **Art IV**

Students identify the media and procedures used to produce two- and three-dimensional artwork. They learn which fields of endeavor offer opportunities for artistic careers. Children view art as a way of understanding other cultures. They understand art in a historical context and appreciate the historical forces affecting the art of an era. At this level students develop openness towards new styles of art. They understand the sources of art criticism available and appreciate their contribution to artistic understanding and awareness. Students interpret artwork on the basis of description, analysis and personal experience. They are able to apply all four stages of art criticism - description, analysis, interpretation, and evaluation - to a work of art. Children understand how social and cultural beliefs can influence responses to works of art. They understand and identify subjects, themes and symbols as they research art history and world culture. Fourth Year students use the computer to create artwork as it relates to graphic design,

photography and surface design. They are able to apply elements of design to photographic images, operate a 35mm camera, develop film, and create photographic images. In addition, children construct and use a pinhole camera to create an image. They learn to use a digital camera, download images, and manipulate these images using computer programs such as PhotoShop and Photo Edges. Students learn to print images and develop them into fine art images through the use of other media. They study different artists and their techniques that relate to the classroom projects.

## **II. Computer Technology**

Computer skills are integrated with core subject instruction. Our goal is to create critical thinkers, problem solvers and effective communicators who are proficient in 21<sup>st</sup> Century content and skills.

### **Computer Technology I**

Students review basic digital imaging skills including layers, selection tools, file formats, resizing, and painting and editing tools. These skills are used in a variety of projects to manipulate images and create digital artwork. In conjunction with their history class, students do extensive Internet research on ancient civilizations, focusing on the selection of optimal search tools, keeping digital records of resources and citing electronic references. Additionally, students collect, input, analyze, and display data using Excel and are able to use simple formulas and charts, adding appropriate labels and legends. Students use Geometer's Sketchpad in their math classes to construct simple figures. Optional independent studies are available during LEAP.

### **Computer Technology II**

Using increasingly sophisticated digital imaging skills, students create various projects including journal covers and art pieces based on digital photography. In science students are introduced to the use of Vernier probes in an activity involving temperature. English classes develop a newspaper related to their study of *Romeo and Juliet*. Language classes use iMovie to record activities and edit recorded film as students participate in the target language.

### **Computer Technology III**

Students master most digital imaging techniques including color correction, masks and channels, photo retouching, and text effects. A unit on color theory allows them to combine these skills in a variety of projects including a multi-layered poster-size photomontage. iMovie is used to present a narrative poem written in English class by creating visuals, narrating their poem in a “voice-over” and supplying a sound track appropriate to the period. An extensive research project is undertaken with the history class in which the taking and organizing of notes is accomplished with Excel. Correct citation format and paraphrasing is emphasized. In science, students use digital images from the microscope to animate cell division. Geometry concepts are extended with the use of Geometer’s Sketchpad as students work on independent projects.

The one-to-one computer laptop program initiated for seniors during the 2005-2006 school year was extended to the Third Year class during the 2007-2008 school year. Students bring their computers to class and are able to take them home at night.

### **Computer Technology IV**

The one-to-one program put a laptop in the hands of all senior class members. Students bring their computers to class and are able to take them home at night. After the inaugural year, students reported that having laptops made them better organized, more independent, motivated, and engaged in the learning process.

Seniors use advanced PhotoShop features including filters and plug-ins such as Photographic Edges and Eye Candy to create digital artwork as well as a poster for their language class.

Vernier probes are used in science to study light and motion, while Mindstorms robotics enhance the study of how gears

affect the speed and force of a motor. Additionally, students use iMovie to illustrate Newton's laws of motion. In their physical education class, students use Excel to track their pulse rate as they engage in a series of activities throughout the year. PowerPoint is used as a presentation tool for research conducted in history class. Geometer's Sketchpad is used in the advanced math classes and as an exploration tool. Senior students create a presentation for their graduation using the iLife suite.

See **Electives** for additional computer technology options.

### **III. English**

#### **English I**

Students identify the elements of fiction and examples of irony, foreshadowing, symbolism, and tone. They examine cause and effect. At this level children find quotes from texts to support statements on character, theme and symbolism. They write analytical paragraphs and essays incorporating textual support, transitional expressions, as well as creative introductions and conclusions. First Year students write persuasive essays and write poetry exploring theme and symbolism. They identify poetic techniques such as apostrophe, internal and end rhyme, assonance and consonance, simile, metaphor, and personification. In addition, students identify perspective of narrator and identify tone. They write short stories and personal narratives. In grammar, students learn to differentiate between the eight parts of speech and to identify subject and predicate. Additionally, they identify sentences by purpose and classify types of sentences. They label complements, become familiar with the rules of punctuation and parallel structure, and also develop proofreading skills.

#### **English II**

This course focuses on sharpening the skills gained in First Year. Prewriting strategies are reviewed. Students revisit the elements of the paragraph and the five-paragraph essay. At this level the incorporation of quotations and proofreading lead to the composition of business letters and multiple formal essays. Students also write a dialogue using quotation marks. They write a narrative focusing on character and setting. In Second Year students emulate authors studied (Doyle, Twain) and compose different types of poems: lyric, free verse and theme-based. They utilize standard poetic devices. Students also review the eight parts of speech and study subjects and predicates. They practice the correct use of the comma, semicolon and colon.

Additionally, the use of quotation marks is emphasized. At this level children practice subject-predicate and noun-pronoun agreement. They become familiar with independent and dependent clauses; simple, complex and compound-complex sentence; and the phrase (verbal, appositive, prepositional).

### **English III**

An emphasis on ethics guides the study of literature in Third Year. Students find quotes to support statements on characters' motivations and societal issues. They correlate the text to society and make connections between literature and pop culture. Students write analytical paragraphs and essays. They research historical events and cite sources according to MLA standards. At this level students engage in oral discussion and debate. Students also identify such poetic techniques as apostrophe, internal, end and slant rhyme, simile, metaphor, and personification. They also memorize and present poems. Students identify perspective, tone and theme of poems. They identify various poetic forms - the ballad, narrative poetry and the sonnet. Additionally, they write poems in various poetic forms, incorporating poetic techniques. Students write short stories. In grammar they extend their review of the basics into a study of the clause.

### **English IV**

Students determine how literary components integrate to make a work a masterpiece. They write a research paper based on a short story writer's life and times. Students follow MLA guidelines for style and citation. They memorize segments of works and poems for oral interpretation and write expository papers containing sophisticated syntax, diction and style. In addition, they write introductions utilizing quotations and cultural references. Students explicate passages and poems. They research the historical, cultural and social backgrounds of the works studied and engage in oral discussion and debate.

Creative writing opportunities include emulating authors such as Austen and Wilde, writing different types of fiction (short story, skit, satire); composing different types of verse (sonnet, villanelle, ode); and writing a poem as an extended metaphor.

## **IV. Human Development**

### **Human Development I**

Students in Third Year Upper School consider “community.” Its many aspects include size, kind, benefits, and difficulties. Students examine concepts such as hetero- and homogeneity, marginalization and splinter groups. These topics are explored through the reading of books that consider various minority and/or immigration groups, racism and discrimination. Human Development is a one semester graded course.

### **Human Development II**

At the Year Four level, students delve into personal identity with all of its ramifications: friendships, family (including definitions and characteristics of both functional and dysfunctional family life), the conflicts of dependence versus independence, substance use and abuse, “red flag” situations, and sexuality. In addition, students explore strategies for staying safe, clean, sober, and abstinent. Selected literature pieces act as a stimuli to discussion. Human Development II is a one semester graded course.

## **V. Mathematics**

The departmental structure of the Upper School allows it to further differentiate the math curriculum for our students' wide range of abilities. Students are assessed regularly to determine and/or adjust placement along our mathematics continuum.

Classes are designed to broaden mathematical knowledge and skills to prepare students for higher math courses. Students master fundamental processes while challenging their own problem solving abilities. Throughout the Upper School curriculum, technology, including the graphing calculator, is used as a tool to develop concepts fully and to apply these lessons to the real world. Competitive math problems are another topic found across the curriculum. The Continental and California Math Leagues offer diverse exercises for all students.

### **Math 6**

This course concentrates on the computational skills involving integers, fractions and decimals. Percentage applications are stressed in relation to these skills. Algebraic expressions and equations involving one variable are solved. Geometry topics include perimeter, area, volume, and angle measure. Statistics such as mean, mode and range are discussed in terms of a given list. Real world applications are stressed throughout the different topics.

### **Pre-Algebra** (Prerequisite: Math 6 or teacher recommendation)

This course takes the topics covered in Math 6 and adds another level of depth and complexity to prepare students better for algebra and beyond. Evaluating expressions and solving more complex equations and inequalities are two such skills emphasized. Polynomials are simplified, added, subtracted and multiplied. Rules regarding exponents are included in the presentation of both expressions and polynomials. Linear

graphing onto the coordinate plane using slope and the y intercept is introduced. Percentage applications such as tax, discount and change are emphasized. Geometry topics such as surface area, volume and parallel lines are presented with more depth.

**Algebra I** (Prerequisite: Pre-algebra or teacher recommendation)

This course is designed to prepare students fully for future course work in mathematics. The skills developed here serve as a foundation. Expressions are evaluated and equations are solved. Inequalities are solved and graphed on a number line. Factoring is emphasized to later perform operations on polynomials and solve quadratic equations. Linear equations are graphed and analyzed in terms of slope and intercepts. Linear systems are solved by graphing, linear combination and substitution. Radical expressions are simplified, added, subtracted, multiplied, and divided. Radical equations are solved. Function notation is introduced including domain and range. Quadratic functions are graphed using the vertex and intercepts which are found by factoring, completing the square or the quadratic formula. The three basic trig functions cosine, sine and tangent are defined and computed given a right triangle.

**Algebra II** (Prerequisite: Algebra I or Geometry I)

All the concepts in Algebra I are studied again with greater depth, complexity and application. Matrices are introduced as both a mode of solution and decoding device. Exponential, quadratic, higher degree, and logarithmic functions are graphed and analyzed. Conic sections are identified and graphed. Probability including combinations and permutations are calculated. Series and sequences, particularly arithmetic and geometric are studied. Binomial expansion and Pascal's Triangle are investigated. The graphing calculator is used throughout the course as a tool to analyze problems.

### **Geometry** (Prerequisite Algebra I)

This is a formal course in Euclidean geometry with a focus on proof and sequential problem solving. Definitions, postulates and theorems are used to present arguments. Several types of proofs are studied, including two-column, paragraph, coordinate, and indirect. Angles, segments, parallels, triangles, quadrilaterals, polygons, inequalities, similarity, right triangles, circles, area, volume, and construction are the general topics discussed in great detail throughout the course.

### **Pre-Calculus** (Prerequisite Algebra II and Geometry)

This course begins with an in-depth analysis of linear, quadratic, logarithmic, exponential, and higher degree functions. Conic sections are graphed and key points are computed, including shifts and rotation. The study of trigonometry is the next focus. Defining the trig functions, computing key values, radian measure, and solving equations involving trig and inverse functions set the stage for further investigations. Finding the parts of a triangle with the laws on sine and cosine is a point of emphasis. Identities are proven formally. The area of a triangle is computed using Heron's Formula or the sine formula. Polar coordinates and polar graphing including complex numbers is presented. Vectors, matrices involving networks, probability, statistics, sequences, and limits are the other topics of discussion to prepare students for calculus.

### **Calculus** (Prerequisite: Pre-Calculus)

The organizing concepts of this course are the historical problems of finding the slope of a curve and the area of a curve. The course takes all of pre-calculus mathematics and extends it by incorporating the limit concept. Differentiation, anti-differentiation and definite integrals are studied in the context of polynomial, trigonometric, and exponential functions. Techniques of differentiation include the product, quotient and

chain rules. Implicit differentiation is applied to solve related rates, extremes on an interval and optimization problems. Techniques of anti-differentiation include integration by substitution, definite integrals, integration by parts, partial fractions, and numerical integration. Techniques such as separation of variables are used to solve first order linear differential equations. The course is rich in application as real world problems are integrated into every technique and concept studied. Graphing calculators are used everyday to inspect, verify and explore.

See **Electives** for additional math options.

## **VI. Music**

### **Orff Ensemble I**

This course continues to use the practices of Orff-Schulwerk at higher levels. The First Year students meet twice a week for forty-five minutes to play music and dance. Learning through hands-on music-making and creating one's own music remain at the core of the experience while simultaneously demanding more academic understanding of both music theory and music history. Singing, ensemble playing, dancing speech, and body percussion remain an integral part of the program. This course is designed to reinforce concepts learned in Lower School while featuring improvisation as a key element in the process.

Students learn about the cultures and pieces from various parts of the world such as the Caribbean, South America, Europe, Africa, and Asia. Students also study jazz by playing pieces and learning about the historical aspects of each piece.

Performance opportunities include performing at on-campus events and concerts throughout the year.

See **Electives** for additional music options.

## **VII. Physical Education**

### **Physical Education I**

In First Year Upper School, the students participate in activities that give them the opportunity for enjoyment, challenge, improvement of all athletic skills, and social interaction. They are given the opportunity to participate in several after school interscholastic sports: boys' flag football, basketball, track and field, and soccer; girls' basketball, soccer, track and field, and volleyball.

The physical education units for the year are: football, basketball, fitness training and testing, track and field, volleyball, soccer, scooter activities, cooperative games, multicultural dance, jump rope, and other fun and challenging games and activities.

### **Physical Education II**

In Second Year Upper School, the students continue to participate in activities that encourage the improvement and refinement of all athletic skills. There is an added focus on cooperation, teamwork, self-discipline, and self-motivation. The students are given the opportunity to participate in several after school interscholastic sports: boys' flag football, basketball, track and field, and soccer; girls' basketball, soccer, track and field, and volleyball.

The physical education units for the year are football, basketball, fitness training and testing, track and field, softball, volley tennis, handball, cooperative games, hockey, lacrosse, speed-away, and other fun and challenging activities and games.

### **Physical Education III and IV**

In Third and Fourth Year Upper School, the combined classes continue to refine their skills in some team sports and begin to focus on more individual and lifetime sports. They are also given the opportunity to participate in several after school interscholastic sports: boys' flag-football and basketball; girls' basketball and volleyball.

The physical education units during these two years include fitness conditioning and training, basketball, football, lacrosse, hockey, bocce ball, fencing, hiking, tennis, golf, archery, and other fun and recreational games.

See **Electives** for additional physical education options.

## **VIII. Science**

Acquiring scientific knowledge about how the world works does not necessarily lead to an understanding of how science itself works, and neither does knowledge of philosophy and sociology alone lead to a scientific understanding of the world. The challenge is to weave these different aspects of science together so that they reinforce one another.

For students in the Upper School, an emphasis is placed on incorporating the nature of science in the research of all projects and an allowance for students to work with the appropriate tools of science to answer their questions. It is this combination of student investigation and concept development that is at the core of the Upper School science curriculum.

### **Science I (Integrated Science)**

Students study living organisms including bacteria, protists, fungi, plantae, vertebrates, and invertebrates. They explore the evolution of life on earth. Students consider ecology and food chains. The Scientific Method is employed in all experiments. Participation in the Science Fair, while not required, is encouraged. At this level students learn the forms of matter (gas, liquid, solid); heat conduction, convection and radiation; atomic structure and the Periodic Table; and electricity.

### **Science II (Astronomy and Geology)**

Students explore various units in astronomy, including stars and galaxies, the solar system, earth and its moons. They explore various units in geology, including earth's interior, movement of the crust, earthquakes, volcanoes, and plate tectonics. Students participate in the annual Science Fair, including reports and presentations.

### **Science III (Cellular Biology)**

Students explore various units of life science, including the origin of life, the characteristics of life, the needs of living things, cell theory, human biology genetics, and evolution. They participate in the annual Science Fair, including reports and presentations.

### **Science IV (Physical Science)**

Students experience the richness and excitement of knowing about and understanding the natural world. They use appropriate scientific processes and principles in making personal decisions. Students engage intelligently in public discourse and debate matters of scientific and technological concern. They explore various units in motion, forces and energy. At this level children delve into machines, energy and power. They also explore various units in sound and light, including characteristics of waves, sound and light. In addition, students investigate matter and reactions, including an introduction to matter, elements, the Periodic Table, and chemical reactions. Participation in the Science Fair, while not required, is encouraged.

See **Electives** for additional science options.

## **IX. Social Studies**

### **Social Studies I (Anthropology/World History I)**

The First Year social studies curriculum uses the disciplines of anthropology and archaeology to introduce and reinforce various academic skills and study habits. During the course of the first year in the Upper School, students analyze a burial site, are introduced to the concepts of relative and absolute time and the principles of evolutionary biology. In addition, they undertake an analysis of Pliocene and Pleistocene hominids. The students are also introduced to the beginnings of human stone technology and learn various techniques for making stone tools. The students also practice one of the techniques when they make their own stone tool. Towards the end of the school year, they begin a study of the beginnings of settled village life as part of a study on the beginnings of the river civilizations. This study continues into the second year course on ancient civilizations.

### **Social Studies II (World History II)**

World History II is a continuation of the two-year sequence of world history begun in First Year. In the first semester, students begin by reviewing the major highlights of the early river civilizations of Africa and Asia. From there, they move on to survey the major forces and trends that created the city-state world of the Ancient Greeks: the geography, the major cultural contributions, the internal rivalries, the external conflicts, and the spread and influence of Hellenistic culture in the Mediterranean world. Students conclude the fall semester with the same kind of look at the rise and fall of Rome. In the second semester, the class emphasizes not only the Medieval and Renaissance periods of European history but delve into the ongoing developments among the peoples of Africa, the Middle East and Asia. Particular attention is paid to the rise of feudalism, the dominating position of the Catholic Church, the appearance and spread of Islam, the resulting East-West

conflicts, and the beginning of the modern world. In investigating these various topic areas, a variety of basic research tools, study, writing, test-taking, and organizational skills are emphasized. There is also an ongoing mix of individual and small group assignments designed to complement the basic discussion orientation of the class.

### **Social Studies III (United States History I)**

Upper School United States History I covers the course of our nation's history from the Revolution through the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. In the first semester, major parts of the Colonial Era, especially those developments leading up to the break with Great Britain are reviewed. From there, the class investigates the causes, conduct and consequences of the Revolution, and the establishment of the United States. An overview of the early Republic with particular emphasis on the creation and structure of the Constitution of 1787 and the rise of political parties in America follow that unit. As it moves on into the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, the class surveys the physical, political, economic, and social changes going on in the country. Both the actions of major players and the experiences of the common people are touched upon during these surveys. In the second semester, the chronological approach is continued up through the Civil War and Reconstruction, but certain themes and major points also are reinforced along the way. Foremost among those are the role of compromise in American history, the sense of American "specialness," both the rational and irrational motives of human actions, and the importance of perspective in constructing and understanding history. In studying these various topic areas, a variety of study, writing, research, and organizational skills are emphasized.

## **Social Studies IV (United States History II)**

The Second Year of U.S. History begins with a review of the American scene in the Ante-bellum period, with emphasis on the contending political, social and economic forces at work in the country during the 1850s. From there, students survey the conduct and outcomes of the Civil War. Both the actions of the key leaders on the two sides and the lives of ordinary Americans at war are part of that survey. Then, the class looks at the Reconstruction Era, with particular attention paid to the Afro-American experience after emancipation. Highlighting the continuing trends of westward expansion, urban-industrial growth, immigration, and socio-political change from the latter decades of the 19th Century to the pre-World War I years rounds out the rest of the second semester. In the second semester, the rise of American power on the global stage, economic challenges, social ferment, and political changes are discussed and analyzed. As with the Third Year course, students use primary sources in a variety of assignments. In addition, further development of research techniques, critical reading and writing skills, and the creative expression of history learning are pursued through some of those same assignments.

## **X. Theatre Arts**

### **Theatre Arts I and II**

Theatre Arts I and II are part of the Upper School Arts Curriculum. Students study multicultural and musical theatre history, improvisation and basic acting technique. Participants continue to use and build skills in story telling and character development through scene and monologue work. The class is a fun and exciting introduction to Theatre Arts.

### **Theatre Arts III and IV**

In Theatre Arts III and IV, the focus is on performance. Students bring to life a full-length theatrical production. They use their skills in story telling, acting technique and character development to create a professional piece of theatre, incorporating lighting, sound and costuming. Through performance, students develop confidence.

## **XI. World Languages**

### **French I**

In the First Year students learn basic communication skills. They ask and answer simple questions and discuss topics such as family, friends, food, travel, and weather. Conversation and writing are primarily in the present tense with limited introduction to past narration. In addition, students are introduced to French culture: artists, scientists, holidays, and the French way of life.

### **French II**

In the Second Year students continue to expand their communication skills and use more complex constructions. Narration includes past and future events and students begin reading simple French books. Aspects of French culture continue to be explored with emphasis on French-speaking countries such as the Niger and the Ivory Coast.

### **French III**

In the Third Year students employ conversation and writing skills to discuss topics such as music, entertainment, sports, nature, jobs, and professions. Reading selections become more advanced with emphasis on French culture.

### **French IV**

In the Fourth Year emphasis is on improving reading skills with a variety of literary selections: poems, short stories and plays. Perfect and conditional tenses are examined, as well as the subjunctive mood.

## **Latin I**

Latin I begins the *Ecce Romani* series with an introduction to the language, culture, traditions and daily life of the ancient Romans living in a resort town named Baiae (Italia) in 80 A.D. The emphasis is on the reading of Latin, but the other language skills of speaking, writing and listening are included as well. By reading about the life of an actual Roman family, students become familiar with the grammar, syntax and written expressions of the Romans. Latin vocabulary enables them to make connections between Latin and English and the modern Romance languages. Students have the opportunity to investigate aspects of the ancient culture through two major research projects.

## **Latin II**

Latin II continues the story begun in Latin I, taking the characters traveling on the Appian Way from Baiae to Rome. In this context, students learn additional vocabulary and points of grammar and syntax in order to read more complex sentences and paragraphs. Work on word derivatives is continued to help with English vocabulary building. There is more emphasis placed on reading for comprehension and translating by context. Students investigate the influence of the Roman culture around the world and its impact on life in the modern world through two major research projects.

## **Latin III**

Latin III continues the story begun in Latin I and II, as the characters have finally arrived in Rome. In this context, students take part in an ongoing review of both the first and second year grammar. The introduction of new grammatical material is given as well as the opportunity to develop increasingly sophisticated reading skills. Students continue to investigate aspects of Roman culture through two major research projects.

## **Latin IV**

In Latin IV students use the grammar and vocabulary taught in Latin I–III to read un-adapted passages of Latin literature from Roman authors. Students develop dictionary skills to facilitate reading a broad base of authors or genres. As a result, reading employs all methods needed for an accurate interpretation of authentic texts. Students will complete one major project on a Roman author of their choice and a second project on some other aspect of Roman culture.

## **Spanish I**

The First Year course at The Mirman School is equivalent to a typical ninth grade course of study. All four skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing, as well as culture are emphasized. In addition, study skills specific to foreign language are presented and stressed throughout the course. By the end of the year, students have become familiar with classroom instructions given in Spanish and can speak in the present tense. They can give appropriate greetings, make introductions, ask for directions, and form questions. They have mastery of some important idiomatic expressions with *hacer*, *ir*, and *tener* and can talk about weather and time. Numerous games, skits and communicative activities make this course lively, fun and meaningful.

## **Spanish II**

The Second Year of study begins with a review of interrogatives (question words), irregular verbs and idiomatic expressions. After an extensive cultural unit on Spanish foods, students prepare menus, recipe cards and participate in the Annual Spanish Luncheon. The Second Year of study continues with an examination of commands, reflexive verbs, and comparison of two past tenses, the preterite and the imperfect. At the end of the year, students can talk about past experiences and their daily

routine using reflexive verbs. Student projects include the presentation of original television scripts, magic tricks, food demonstrations, and an autobiographical photo album. Listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills continue to expand.

### **Spanish III**

In the Third Year of study, students are provided with opportunities, which encourage them to incorporate their knowledge of different tenses. Special emphasis is given to the future tense and the use of object pronouns. Highlights include the annual fashion show, a lively auction, a car swap meet, and baking Spanish fortune cookies. At the end of Third Year, students have completed what is typically covered in the ninth and tenth grades of a traditional high school and can speak and write in the present, past and future tenses.

### **Spanish IV**

The Fourth Year of study allows students to finally enjoy the fruits of their labor. Students begin the year working with Spanish newspapers and acting as television reporters. Reading comprehension is emphasized and literary selections are extensive and varied. After reading a Mexican folktale, students have the opportunity to write and present their own humorous adventures. An in-depth study of the formation and uses of the subjunctive mood allows students to express their feelings on a wide variety of topics and to hypothesize. In the second semester, students view popular full-length movies to strengthen their listening skills and design a movie poster in Spanish. Culminating activities include a trip to a Spanish restaurant and the Senior Spanish Scrabble Tournament.

See **Electives** for additional World Languages options.

## **XII. Electives**

Upper School students are offered the choice of 1 four-day or 2 two-day electives. These are yearlong, graded classes. Elective choices change as student needs and interests become apparent. Electives in 2008-2009 include the following:

### **Academic Resource Center**

ARC-A meets 2X per week

ARC-B meets 2X per week

ARC offers students a quiet study environment in which to seek assistance from a teacher in any subject or assignment. It is an opportunity to review troublesome concepts, strengthen skills for standardized tests or enrich students. In addition to receiving individualized help, students have an opportunity to work quietly on homework and projects.

### **Architecture and Paper Engineering**

Meets X2 per week

Upper School students learn the joy of paper engineering and putting math, art and design to work. Students work with and produce paper replicas of well-known architectural landmarks such as Shakespeare's Globe Theater, the Leaning Tower of Pisa, the Arch of Triumph, and many more. They follow a step-by-step detailed list of instructions accompanied by 3-D diagram, resulting in a masterpiece of form and structure. Additionally, students work with cutting mats, goggles and exacta knives in some of the more detailed and precise pieces requiring that students adhere to rules of safety and precaution.

### **Computers: Media Literacy and Digital Video Production**

Meets X2 per week

This elective begins by providing students with the critical and cognitive skills needed to decipher the hundreds of messages sent to them through various media on a daily basis. To be "media literate" is to understand the language, grammar and "rhetoric" of the media as well as appreciate the artistry behind it. They then use some of these persuasive techniques to develop, produce, shoot, and edit several short videos on a topic of interest to them covering several genres. They learn to use iMovie and the school's digital video cameras.

### **Computers: Introduction to Flash Animation**

Meets X2 per week

This elective introduces students to Flash MX as a multimedia design environment and shows them its capabilities in creating simple animations and simulations. Students acquire the basic skills of drawing, creating animations, importing multimedia objects, creating symbols, and exporting the products to a web page or as a standalone file.

Students create animations using the timeline, motion and shape 'tweens,' layers, and masks as they work with graphic and sound libraries. They learn to add simple action scripts and command buttons to control an animation and add interactivity to it.

### **Concert Singers**

Meets 4X per week

The Upper School Concert Singers is a special learning environment designed to provide a rich and rewarding experience for each child. The repertoire is chosen from masters like Beethoven, Bach, Mozart, and Haydn. The choir also sings music from other cultures that include popular, folk, patriotic, and Broadway music as part of their repertoire. Focus is on producing a free and healthy sound and on reinforcing sight singing learned in the classroom. Our mandate is to educate children with a grounded sense of identity in our own culture, and from that rock-solid base, reach out through musical excellence to the rest of the globe through the medium of choral music. Performance opportunities include the December Winter Concert, out-reach concerts in the community, state choir competitions, Grandparents' Day, Matriculation Assembly, spring concerts, and graduation.

### **Cooking/Baking**

Meets 2X per week

Students prepare different foods by learning the basic procedures involved in creating and following a recipe. In addition to learning fundamental concepts and culinary techniques, students learn the science behind cooking and baking. Classes cover such diverse topics as knife skills, tarts and pies, sauce making, cooking with different meats and vegetables, cakes, cookies, no-bake desserts, and ethnic cooking.

Students follow safety procedures involved in the kitchen at all times. Students learn basic techniques such as reading and creating a recipe, measurements and the tools used to measure ingredients, different cutting styles, vocabulary of the kitchen, and scientific processes involved in all the foods prepared.

## **Ecology**

Meets 2X per week

This elective introduces ecology as a science reviewing evolutionary principles and life history. Particular attention is placed upon the ecology of populations, their growth and regulation, ecological interactions, energy flow, food chains/webs, competition, symbiotic relationships, mutualism, commensalisms, and parasitism. Terrestrial and aquatic biomes are reviewed along with issues such as pollution, waste, hydrology, and the human impact in general. This class allows students to learn exciting ways they can better understand and benefit the environment they share.

## **Film: Moral and Ethical Issues on Film**

Meets 4X per week

Moral and Ethical Issues on Film affords students with an opportunity to investigate a variety of societal issues and human dilemmas through the medium of film. These films are drawn from an array of genres: westerns, comedies, dramas, war films, and film noir. In the first half of the class, the offerings are grouped into two broad categories: medical issues and legal/personal rights issues. Films such as “What About Bob?” (ego and the limits of responsibility), “Awakenings” (medical experimentation and intervention), “Arsenic and Old Lace” (family ties and euthanasia/mass murder), “Fury” and “The Bravados” (revenge vs. justice), “This Gun is For Hire” (nature of criminality), “Twelve Angry Men” (reasonable doubt and fairness), and “I Am a Fugitive From the Chain Gang” (institutional injustice) will be screened, discussed and analyzed. In the second semester, the course delves into larger historically based questions of choice and action. Films such as “Hombre” (racism, survival, and individual vs. collective responsibility), “The Molly Maguires” (personal choice in the midst of industrial warfare), “Paths of Glory,” (the corrupting nature of power and the brutality of war), “Inherit the Wind” (freedom of thought vs.

community standards), and “The Front” (the corrosive nature of fear in Cold War America) are investigated.

### **Knitting, Crocheting and Needle Point**

Meets 2X per week

Initially, students learn the basics of knitting: casting on, the knit stitch, the purl stitch, and the bind off. After learning the basic skills, students are required to do two projects in class: a scarf and a headband. As the year progresses, students learn the basics of crochet: chain stitch, single crochet, half double crochet, and double crochet. Students are required to make a hat. Finally, students learn the continental stitch: the basic stitch in needlepoint. Students are required to stitch their name in canvas. This course is designed to give a lifetime of pleasure and relaxation. The students learn to create handmade items for themselves and for the people they love.

### **Mandarin**

Meets 2X per week

Students have the opportunity to be introduced to the Asian language of Mandarin. Reading, writing and speaking skills are stressed.

### **Mathcounts Beginning**

Meets 2X per week

This course is designed for the beginning student to introduce the basic formulae and strategies for competitive math. Only serious problem solvers who enjoy challenges are encouraged to enroll. Students are expected to attend the Don Bosco Math Competition in November.

### **Mathcounts Advanced**

Meets 2X per week

This is a very rigorous training class for our more experienced mathletes. Experience and commitment are essentials. The Mathcounts team is selected from the students in this class.

### **Mind Puzzles**

Meets 2X and 2X per week

This fast-paced, two-day elective challenges students with short, interesting mind puzzles of various types. It is an elective designed to both challenge and improve problem solving skills.

### **Physical Education**

Meets 2X per week

This class is designed to supplement the school's regular physical education program with extra physical activities that have been included in their regular curriculum.

Students are given the class a choice of two physical activities each week. Every other week the class selects two activities that are different from the ones the instructors selected the previous week. This procedure gives the class the opportunity to participate in a voting process to select their favorite activities and gives them a part in determining the curriculum of the elective. The instructors are also able to select activities that are different from the ones chosen by the class but still geared towards the needs of the students.

Activities include: team sports (basketball, lacrosse, hockey, volleyball, baseball), recreational activities (bocce ball, croquet, volley tennis) and traditional games (mat ball, gauntlet, dodge ball).

### **Science Fair: Expository Writing and the Research Paper**

Meets 2X per week

Students spend the first semester working on a research paper that can be extended into a science fair experiment for the second semester. Research methods based upon MLA standards are employed.

### **Speech**

Meets 2X per week

Speech is a full year course that teaches the rudiments of speech making and prepares students to participate in the Camino Real Speech League. The league consists of a group of about fifteen middle schools from Los Angeles and Ventura Counties. Competitions are held approximately six Saturdays during the course of the school year. Students who win or place in any speech category are eligible to participate in the final competition.

At each speech meet, children are able to participate in two different speech categories. Categories range from humorous to dramatic, poetry to impromptu.

During class time, students research their subjects and rehearse their speeches. They also critique each other's presentations. Students are expected to come prepared, to assist their classmates and to attend the competitions for which they have registered.

### **Technology Team**

Meets 2X per week

The technology team consists of students who have an interest in helping to support and maintain the technology at the Mirman School. Students must agree to uphold and protect the school's appropriate use policies.

## **Yearbook**

Meets 4X per week

Students create the Mirman School yearbook using Adobe InDesign. The yearbook staff determines the theme for the year, establishes the ladder and creates style guides for layout, graphics and copy. Using this information, students work in pairs to develop individual spreads and learn to interface with parents, teachers, Lower School students, and administrators as they develop the page content. They are responsible for all elements on the page including photography, layout, and copy and must meet specific deadlines four times during the year. The yearbook elective provides leadership opportunities for managing, reduction, photography, and copy editors who have additional responsibilities. Course expectations: Students must be willing to commit to a 4-day per week elective. They may not participate in any other electives. Editors must also commit to a weekly session during LEAP.