MANHATTAN DAY SCHOOL
ישיבה אור תורה

Curriculum Guide

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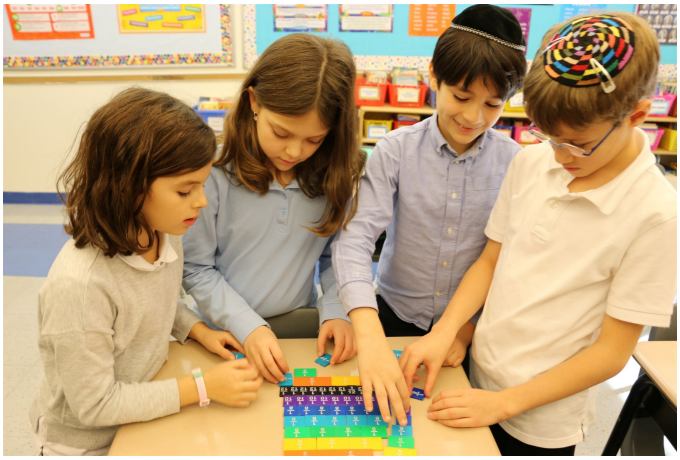
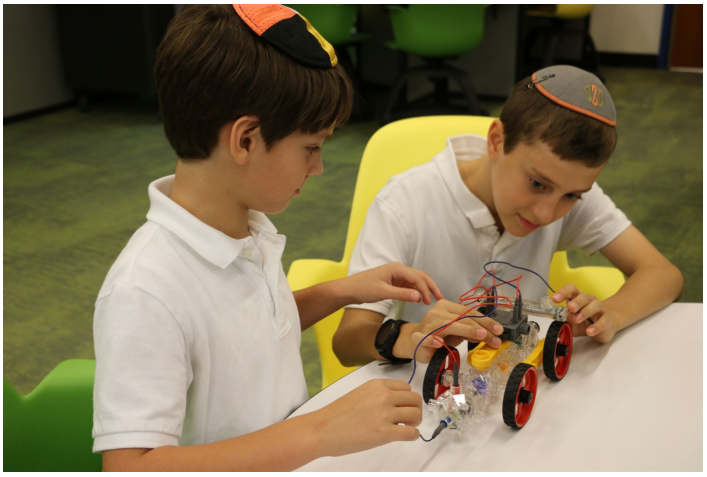
NEW YORK STATE ASSOCIATION OF INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS





Mission Statement

Manhattan Day School/Yeshiva Ohr Torah, founded in 1943, is a Modern Orthodox day school located on the Upper West Side of Manhattan serving Toddlers through Eighth Grade. Our warm and welcoming school community embraces students and families from around the city and around the world, and celebrates the diversity of customs and backgrounds represented.

Our core goals are to inspire our children to:

- Develop a love of Hashem, the Jewish people, Torah and Israel -- through learning and living the texts and traditions of *Am Yisrael* with joy
- Cultivate a lifelong foundation of middot and ethics -- through the fostering of a school culture of respect, safety, and kindness
- Engage in a dynamic exploration of the world around them -- through immersion in the humanities; math, science and emerging technologies; art and music; and the history and culture of our vibrant democracy and global community

Educational Core

At Manhattan Day School, we approach students, teachers, and subjects with respect for their unique characteristics. Just as we differentiate for learners' diverse needs , we know that there is not one pedagogical approach that works for every teacher, every grade, and every subject. We believe that our community is best served by embracing a range of educational practices.

Even as we cultivate eclectic educational approaches, there are learning priorities that are shared in every setting. These include:

- Information Literacy - Students will develop a body of knowledge across diverse subjects that will empower them to thrive religiously and academically in high school and beyond. They will learn from their teachers, peers, books, primary source documents, web-based materials, and interactive, hands-on experimentation. As students encounter various sources of knowledge and information, they will learn to differentiate between reliable and unreliable sources. Students will demonstrate their knowledge through writing, speaking, and creating.
- Critical Thinking and Problem Solving- Students will develop skills to carefully consider a problem, claim, question, or situation in order to determine next steps. They will learn to base their decisions on facts, evidence, and logical consequences and conclusions.
- Self-Direction - Students will be challenged to take responsibility for their own learning and behavior. Students will be guided to reflect on their thinking, learning, and behavior and to use meta-cognitive strategies to continuously grow and improve. Students will be coached toward a growth mindset, understanding that through effort and use of diverse strategies, they can overcome challenges.
- Collaboration - Students will have opportunities to work and learn together, building the skills and dispositions to share, take turns, give and receive feedback, develop consensus, manage conflict, and take responsibility for one another.

Subject Overview

Tefilla

A meaningful *tefilla* education program ensures that our students are taught to connect to the depth and beauty of *tefilla*. Teachers engage students in age-appropriate discussion of why we pray, to whom, how, and what our prayers mean. This pushes students beyond mere recitation or translation to build a meaningful connection to God and the rabbinic tradition of *tefilla*. From an early age, students are taught *halachot* of *tefilla*, and practice in a real *minyan* as they reach bar and *bat mitzvah* age.

Chumash

Chumash is the foundational text of our tradition and a focus of Judaic studies from the earliest ages. Our youngest students learn *parsha* stories each week through which they become familiar with the story of our heritage and learn life lessons from the actions of our ancestors. As students mature and develop Hebrew reading skills, they begin in-depth text study. Our *Chumash* teachers aim to balance an appreciation of the narrative with skill development and vocabulary acquisition.

Navi

The stories of our prophets provide opportunities for personal examination and growth, critical thinking, and moral development. The study of *Navi* begins in fourth grade. Students begin learning about *B'nei Yisrael*'s experience after the death of Moshe *Rabbeinu* and entering the land of Israel. In addition to providing opportunities for meaningful and personally relevant conversations, students become proficient in the early history of *B'nei Yisrael* and our nation's relationship to the land of Israel. Themes of leadership, personal responsibility, courage, and repentance are explored.

Toshba

Torah *Sheba'al Peh*, abbreviated as Toshba, is composed of the *Mishna* and Talmud, or *Gemara*. It is the foundation of our practice in *halacha* and our daily lives as Jews. The development and transmission of the oral tradition from its earliest days through the present is a focus of all *Toshba* learning. Students are exposed to ideas from *Toshba* from the youngest ages, but begin their formal study of *Toshba* in middle school with the study of *Mishna*. They develop *Mishnaic* Hebrew reading and comprehension skills and progress to an ability to analyze a variety of rabbinic texts including various commentaries on Talmud. *Toshba* study introduces classic tractates and *sugyot* of Talmud including *Midrashei Halacha* and *Agadah* preparing them for ongoing development in high school and beyond. While there is a strong emphasis on skill building and technical development, there is also an underlying orientation towards affective components of learning such as loving Torah,

respecting our rabbis, appreciating the oral tradition, and seeing ourselves as participants in the ongoing unfolding of *Toshba*.

Halacha

Our daily lives as Jews are governed by laws and customs governed by both the written and oral Torah and interpreted by our rabbis. Preparing our students to appreciate and properly fulfill these practices is a key component of Jewish education. In the early grades, *halachot* associated with Shabbat and holidays are emphasized alongside *Mitzvot Bein Adam L'Chaveiro* - the *mitzvot* that guide us on how to treat others.

As students mature, more topics in *halachic* practice are explored. There is also an added emphasis on understanding the process through which halacha is developed and continues to respond to modernity and the changing world around us. Students study classic *halachic* texts along with exposure to the theory and systems through which these *halachot* are developed and codified. All Halacha study aims to cultivate a more meaningful and fulfilling engagement with Jewish law, custom, and practice.

Hebrew Language

Ivrit is incorporated into our classrooms and daily school life. Beginning in Early Childhood, *Ivrit* is spoken frequently in and out of the classroom from greetings and directions to songs and holiday traditions. In the Lower School, our teachers use the iTaLAM Hebrew language program and the accompanying books, songs, games, educational videos, and creative tools, to offer a Zionist-Jewish learning experience. Our Middle School *Ivrit* teachers use Neta, a rigorous and rich Hebrew language learning system. Throughout the school, native Hebrew speakers and Israeli *shlichim* make our school an environment that embraces Hebrew and Israeli culture.

Language Arts

Literacy matters. Reading changes the way our brains work, how we construct meaning, how we relate to and communicate with other people, and how we understand the world. Because literacy is so crucial to students' development, Manhattan Day School uses a wide range of strategies to cultivate reading and writing skills. We learn using a combination of whole-class instruction, small-group instruction, collaborative discussions, online literacy enrichment tools, read-alouds, author studies, and much more! Our program is driven by advances in reading research, child development, and is guided by Next Generation standards. The components of literacy, reading, writing, speaking, and listening are integrated into every aspect of learning throughout the day. Because we understand that skilled reading and writing requires both strong foundational skills and strong language skills, we designed our Early Childhood and Lower School programs to provide opportunities to grow in both areas.

With respect to foundational skills, instruction begins by focusing on the sounds in oral language. Students progress through increasingly challenging phonological tasks, culminating in identifying the individual sounds within words. In Nursery 4, students begin to develop alphabetic knowledge as they relate the 26 capital letters to their most frequent sound. In kindergarten, as these skills are mastered, students begin to blend sounds together to read words, and break apart words into sounds to write and spell words. Once in Lower School, students in first, second, and third grades are expressly taught increasingly complex phonics patterns that enable them to decode and spell words. Later in third grade, and continuing into fourth, as students master the previously taught patterns, they begin to study morphology. Learning about word parts (including bases, prefixes, and suffixes) allows students to quickly expand their vocabulary and language usage, preparing them to read the more complex texts found in middle school.

Another foundational skill is developing good handwriting skills. Research tells us that learning to write correctly helps us learn to read. It also shows that we retain more information and understand concepts better when we write by hand rather than use a keyboard or touchscreen. Students in Nursery 4 through fourth grade are instructed using the Handwriting Without Tears program. This begins with the proper way to hold a pencil and capital letter print in Nursery 4, and builds to cursive writing in third and fourth grades.

Meanwhile, students engage with a variety of rich fiction and non-fiction texts as they build their language skills, background knowledge, vocabulary, comprehension, and critical thinking skills. Our Lower School curriculum incorporates English Language Arts and themed units that are based on science and social studies topics. Themes are explored through a variety of fiction and non-fiction interactive read-alouds. This allows students to discuss, analyze, and fall in love with reading through exposure to diverse and sophisticated texts even as they acquire basic reading skills. As students become more fluent and accurate readers (which typically occurs in second or third grade), the gap between texts students can read independently and with support starts to close, and students transition from learning to read to reading to learn. First through third grade students have expansive classroom libraries that allow them to select books for independent reading. Additionally, by fourth grade, students begin to engage in independently reading assigned texts .

Our dynamic approach helps ensure that readers not only advance in their skills, but develop the critical thinking, imagination, and appreciation that will empower them to be enthusiastic life-long readers and thinkers.

Social Studies

Social studies open a student's eyes to subjects as diverse as anthropology, archaeology, economics, geography, history, law, philosophy, political science, psychology, religion, and sociology. Whether they are exploring the meaning of community, the changes to New York

City over time, the geography of New York State, or the American Revolution, students are able to better understand global human society, its development, and our place in it. As students advance through the grades, they are increasingly encouraged to ask sophisticated questions, apply prior knowledge, conduct research, and interpret primary source documents. The critical thinking and organizational skills along with a global and historical perspective they develop will serve Manhattan Day School students well as they enter high school and beyond.

Math

Manhattan Day School is committed to ensuring that all students will leave our school with the skills they need to be successful in their next academic steps. We know that mathematicians are problem solvers first. When children can't find the meaning in numbers and symbols, problem solving is a struggle. We also have learned that Math skills are best acquired through engaging learning experiences. Therefore, when considering programs, we looked for one that helped students learn the language of math by utilizing hands-on learning, visualization, and pictorial representations. We knew that doing this would increase our students' mathematical understanding, confidence, and love of math. Building on the successful implementation of *Singapore Math*® in Early Childhood last year, we are excited to introduce *Math in Focus*®: *Singapore Math*® *by Marshall Cavendish*® in the Lower School this year.

The *Math in Focus*® approach is much different than the traditional way math has been taught. Rather than stressing algorithms to be memorized and applied, *Math in Focus*® cultivates math habits in children by encouraging them to persevere in solving problems, use mathematical reasoning, construct viable arguments, use mathematical models and tools strategically, utilize precise mathematical language, make use of structure, and look for patterns. These foundational skills, coupled with a developmentally appropriate approach to learning allow our students to understand not just the HOW, but the WHY of mathematical processes.

Throughout the year, and from grade to grade, they learn material at an increasingly deep level, resulting in their ability to apply mathematics competently and confidently. Teachers utilize interesting, effective hands-on learning experiences that will lead students from understanding to mastery, using the concrete-pictorial-abstract approach. New concepts are introduced by showing students physical objects (concrete) that they can hold, touch, and manipulate. Then, students transition to using pictures or diagrams (pictorial) to work with mathematical ideas. Finally, they are able to connect these concrete experiences and pictorial representations to symbols such as numbers (abstract). This progression helps students bridge the familiar with

the unfamiliar, allowing them to make connections and develop a deeper conceptual understanding.

We understand that mathematics is a way of thinking that goes beyond procedures and processes. Students need to develop confidence in order to think mathematically. Students build confidence as they practice solving problems in four steps. First, they try to understand the problem by asking themselves questions such as "What is the problem about?" or "What do I need to find?". Next, they think of a plan to solve the problem. This might be acting it out, drawing a diagram, looking for patterns, or simplifying a problem. Once the plan has been selected, they solve the problem, and finally, check their answer. Once they can follow this model successfully, they can apply mathematical thinking to everyday life, and solve all kinds of problems!

One hour each day is dedicated to math instruction in the Lower School grades.

Published author and Tillywig award-winner Mrs. Miryam Alter continues to lead our Middle School math department. Her approach empowers students to not only understand what to do to solve a math problem, but how it is done and why it works. Small group instruction ensures that students at every level are challenged and supported. Our custom-designed math curriculum aligns with New York State standards for each grade and uses diverse materials including manipulatives, books, games, practice exercises, and online resources. Manhattan Day School students graduate with a deep understanding of mathematical ideas and processes and the self-confidence to excel at the high school level.

Science

Beginning with our youngest learners, Manhattan Day School cultivates a spirit of curiosity and exploration in our science program. Students apply the scientific method to their investigations and observations, whether learning about the life cycles of animals and plants, how water can change the face of the earth, or the role of energy in our daily lives. Throughout their time at MDS students will study physics, chemistry, biology, ecology, geology, and astronomy. In the classroom, students blend deep study of the known scientific world and open-ended exploration of student-generated questions and problems. This pairing of knowledge and exploration prepares students to work collaboratively through a process of experimentation, feedback, and revision throughout their lives.

STEAM

Our innovative STEAM program takes place in our state-of-the-art SmartLab where students in grades K-8 attend weekly STEAM classes in which they utilize technology, robotics, coding, circuitry, alternative and renewable energy, computer graphics, and much more. The STEAM curriculum encourages and cultivates personalized learning based on real-world, problem-based, and project-based education. This program enables our

students to take the risks necessary to become leaders and problem solvers and to develop into the next generation of innovators.

The Arts

Visual Fine Arts are an essential element of a complete and balanced education. The Art Curriculum is designed to cultivate the skills and tools needed to access each student's unique and creative potential and thinking. Students study ceramics, drawing, painting, sculpture, printmaking, design, photography, video, filmmaking, mixed media, and architecture. Art is taught with the aim to develop student's aesthetics, techniques, and understanding of the history of visual art. Other artistic disciplines such as performing arts, conceptual art, and textile arts that involve aspects of the visual arts are also taught.

Classes visit and tour local art museums with their art instructor as a guide. Student artwork is featured in our school hallways, on ceiling tiles around the school, and in our eighth-grade collaborative digital stained-glass windows in our Beit Midrash. Our Middle School art students' Jewish Hall of Fame is on permanent exhibit at the Center for Jewish History.

Introducing music in elementary school years helps foster a positive attitude toward learning while building imagination and intellectual curiosity. Song permeates the halls of our Early Childhood and our greatly anticipated Early Childhood Rosh Chodesh sing-a-longs are sure to be a highlight for our younger students. The Lower School music program teaches students music appreciation, theory, composition, and performance. They also practice interpreting and responding to classical music through movement, art, and conversation. Students in early grades learn about music from cultures around the world, singing in different languages and learning from a diverse array of musicians. Students learn to read a basic music score, play various instruments, recognize the instruments of the orchestra, and even write and perform their original pieces. Students are exposed to music at its highest standard by attending and performing at venues around New York City such as Carnegie Hall and Lincoln Center.

Physical Education

The athletics department at MDS aims to successfully guide the development of each student while teaching lessons in accountability, being coachable, health and fitness, and teamwork. We also teach leadership and life skills through athletics, allowing students to grow and reach higher levels of confidence that help develop character.

The MDS Mavericks cultivate school spirit and community pride by embracing the best of what it means to be a student-athlete. Our championship basketball, soccer, and hockey teams' emphasis on effort, teamwork, and good sportsmanship make "The Mavs" excellent school ambassadors.

Curriculum by Grade

First Grade

Tefilla

First graders begin the year talking about *tefilla* as they practice the songs and *tefillot* they learned in Early Childhood. Each part of *tefilla* is explained with a focus on making meaning. Pictures are used as visual cues to help students remember the main ideas of the *tefillot* they learn. Students begin to appreciate that *tefillot* are not merely songs, but are part of their relationship to God.

Students also expand their daily *tefillot* to include *birkat haTorah*, *birchot hashachar*, the *shema*, and more.

In first grade, as children learn to read Hebrew, they make the transition from praying *ba'al peh* (by heart) to reading from the *siddur*. Students learn how to navigate the siddur and follow along in the text during *tefilla*. This transition is celebrated during our *Chagigat HaSiddur*, a landmark occasion in which children receive their first *siddur*.

Chumash

Chumash is taught primarily through the study of *parshat hashavua* in the first grade. Each week, the Torah portion is explored in-depth. Students become familiar with the textual narrative, including aspects of *p'shat* and *d'rash*. A big idea associated with the parsha is used as a springboard to share Jewish ideas and values. These include welcoming guests, having *emunah*, avoiding gossip, caring for the sick, and expressing gratitude, to name a few.

Though most of the *parsha* is taught using stories, pictures, and interactive activities, one *pasuk* (verse) is chosen as a focal point. Students read this *pasuk* out loud. This serves as reading practice as well as an introduction to the study of Torah texts in their original Hebrew.

Halacha

Halachot (Practices) of the holidays are taught before each Jewish holiday. This enables the students to participate and practice the rituals of the holidays with their families. For example, students learn about listening to the shofar before *Rosh HaShana*, how to light the *chanukiah* before Chanukah, and do in-depth study of the rituals surrounding the *Pesach Seder* before Passover. Each *halacha* is practiced in class. Holiday projects and songs are also taught to reinforce the meanings and values of the holidays.

We use the iTal Am curriculum to reinforce the rituals and meaning of the holidays which uses Hebrew keywords to connect the Hebrew Language to each holiday. This is done through pictures, songs, and games.

Hebrew Language

Hebrew language learning focuses on the aleph-bet. Students learn to recognize, pronounce, and link Hebrew letters and vowels. As each letter is introduced, students' vocabulary in Hebrew grows. *Kriyah* (Hebrew reading) is a core goal of first grade. Using developmentally appropriate texts through the iTal Am curriculum, students' ability to read for themselves develops. Because students are simultaneously learning to read in two languages with different alphabets and different directionality (Hebrew is read right to left), a lot of repetition and practice reading and writing is necessary.

The iTal Am curriculum is a research-based program that is rich with leveled texts, workbooks, visual aids for the classroom, music, online apps, videos, and more.

As in English Language Arts, first grade provides a print-rich environment in which Hebrew words are visible throughout the classroom. Students quickly learn the names of classroom objects and learn how to follow directions given in Hebrew orally and in writing.

We are proud to have introduced the MaDYK Hebrew reading fluency assessment. MaDYK measures are brief, powerful indicators of foundational early literacy skills (phonological awareness, alphabetic principle, and fluency, for example). This benchmarked assessment can help us identify students in need of additional support.

Integrated Literacy Curriculum

Literacy is how children learn everything. Therefore, reading, writing, speaking, and listening is integrated with science and social studies themed units.

First grade students continue to work on foundational skills, including phonemic awareness, phonics and word analysis skills. Doing so helps them decode words with sufficient accuracy and fluency to support comprehension. Building on the most common letter sounds learned in kindergarten, students progress to learning about different types of syllables, words with digraphs, blends, y as a vowel, trigraphs, the most common vowel teams, and common spelling rules. Students will begin to learn about suffixes as they explore -ed, -s, -es, and -ing. As this process unfolds, children read decodable stories that contain the phonics patterns that have previously been taught. This allows students to practice new skills, one at a time, while they are supported by words that they can already read themselves. First grade is a magical year in which students become increasingly independent readers, writers, and thinkers through daily small-group and whole-class learning.

Students are curious to learn about many things and have interests that expand beyond their ability to decode. Our integrated thematic curriculum units form the core of an academic program that focuses on big ideas to illuminate central and universal themes

of human understanding throughout history. Teachers expertly use daily read-alouds and author-studies to help foster an appreciation for literature and develop their students' vocabulary, language comprehension, active listening, discussion, and analytical skills. Similarly, when writing, teachers introduce conventions that will make their writing more legible, but always support and celebrate students' desire to tell stories beyond their current means. Additionally, our large and diverse classroom libraries provide opportunities to explore topics of interest and cultivate a love of reading. In first grade, students are guided by the year-long theme "All Kinds of Friends and Families." Under this umbrella they explore the topics:

- How to be a good friend
- What makes a good story?
- All about living things and their young
- My family and other families
- Author study of beloved children's authors
- When I was little: Personal memoirs

As students make meaning from fiction and non-fiction texts, they also learn how to have collaborative conversations, to ask and answer questions, and to share ideas. Practice in turn-taking, active listening, and making relevant contributions are life and literacy skills that lay a foundation for all learning as well as for social competency.

Speaking and listening are critical skills for expression and building our diverse community of learners. Students also learn how to express themselves in writing in each of the three major modalities of writing: narrative, opinion/argument, and informational. Focusing on the sentence level, first graders also work on the mechanics of writing with proper letter formation in the appropriate left to right orientation as well as conventional spelling and punctuation.

While almost all students enter first grade with some reading and writing skills, we recognize that reading and writing are developmental processes. No two students learn to read and write in precisely the same way or at the same time. We help each student, knowing that the process is not always linear, and that success will come from patient guidance.

Social Studies

Social studies topics are integrated with literacy. Students learn about community, rules, and relationships in their first unit, "How to be a good friend." They then build upon this learning as they read more stories of friendship and explore "What makes a good story?" While working on the theme of "My Family and Other Families, Now and Long Ago," students explore history and geography to develop a sense of their place in their family and their family's place in the world.

Students work on developing an understanding of the chronology of events. This understanding is related both to the sequence of events as well as a developing sense of time in days, weeks, months, and years. Working with comparison and context, students learn to distinguish between the distant past, the recent past, the present, and future events.

Students are introduced to ideas underpinning American democracy and elections. Students learn about rights, responsibilities, and good citizenship as associated with their classroom and family, which in turn becomes a foundation for civics more broadly.

Science

First graders are exposed to a variety of scientific concepts through literacy, social studies, math, and STEAM. They also read a variety of short nonfiction texts about science and the natural world. In dedicated science study, students develop their understanding of how plants and animals survive, grow, and meet their needs as well as how behaviors of parents help their offspring thrive. They discuss the similarities and differences between plant families, animal families, and their own families. This science literacy skill building is coupled with interactive, discovery oriented science labs.

Math

First Grade students will build onto the number sense that they developed in kindergarten. Students deepen their mathematical thinking and skills through hands-on instruction and practice. Specifically, they begin by reviewing prior learning by counting, comparing numbers, and finding number patterns in numbers up to 10. Throughout the year, as their understanding grows, so too do the numbers! Students move from numbers up to 10, up to 20, up to 40, and finally, up to 120. In each case, they work to understand the number first through counting, comparing, and learning about place-value, then moving into addition and subtraction using a variety of models and strategies. In addition to this algebraic thinking, students explore other important math topics including shapes and patterns, measuring time with clocks and calendars, and measuring length and weight.

As in every subject area, developing mathematical skills augments our work in literacy. Students build their math vocabulary, create and solve word problems, and discuss strategies for adding and subtracting numbers.

STEAM - Robotics

First grade students will begin the year by studying and understanding sequencing. Before touching a robot, students will discuss how to organize the steps for familiar every day procedures, such as making a bowl of cereal. Students will understand that

sequencing and organization are the fundamental principles behind coding and the creation of algorithms.,

Students will learn to collaborate with their peers by working in small groups to successfully program their robots. Students will begin to develop their problem solving skills by examining their programs when their robots do not successfully execute their vision. Over the course of the year, students will use the Blockly app to program the Dot and Dash robots with an increasingly complex series of commands. Students will learn to reflect on their process to help them become more aware of the factors that lead to success.

Music

First graders learn about songwriting through shared class original song composition as well as small group activities.

First grade students begin the year learning what sound is and how vibration is vital to understanding how instruments make music. They will practice rhythm and beat to familiar songs as well as new ones, having their hand at playing various percussion instruments. Students learn curriculum-based songs, connecting their general studies learning with music. In addition, students follow the NYC Musical Explorers Curriculum through Carnegie Hall Education. In this program, students learn about current musicians from around the world, exposing them to the artists' cultures, languages, and music; connecting geography, social studies, and literacy with music. Students learn to sing in various languages and twice a year they see an interactive performance with the musicians they have learned about, singing, and moving to the songs they have practiced.

Visual Arts

First graders begin with artist Piet Mondrian to introduce the primary colors. Much of the learning is hands-on but will include multimedia presentations. In addition to Mondrian, students are introduced to the work of Kandinsky, Miro, Rembrandt, Martinez, van Gogh, Monet, Hockney, Seurat, and others. These are artists who work in drawing and painting, sculpture, and ceramics, spanning expressionism, realism, pointillism, surrealism, and abstract and Indigenous People's art. Over the course of the year, they will get a taste of art history and color theory as well as ample opportunities to work with a variety of art materials and methods inspired by the artists they learn about.

Students travel to a NYC art museum such as the Metropolitan Museum of Art with their teacher to view, sketch, and discuss the artists they learned about in class and develop their understanding and appreciation of art.

Second Grade

Tefilla

By second grade, students' reading skills are improving rapidly. They use the *siddur* each day to improve reading fluency, accuracy, and word recognition through applying the skill of identifying root words (*shorashim*), prefixes and suffixes. Students expand their daily *tefilla* to include *ashrei*, *yishtabach*, and *aleinu*. Students take turns leading the class in *tefilla* as *chazan* or *chazzanit*. Second graders place particular emphasis on the recitation of *Shema*, learning how to pronounce each word properly, following along inside the siddur word by word and reciting the accurate *trop* (cantillation).

Students are taught that *tefilla* is the service of the heart (*Avodah Shebalev*). The students are taught to connect the essence of each *tefilla* to their lives. For example, the theme of *Modeh Ani* is gratefulness. The students express what they are grateful for. This connects to the prayer of *modeh ani*. Similar connections are made throughout *tefilla*.

Chumash

Second grade is a unique time in a students' study of *Chumash*, because it represents the beginning of deep textual study.

Students begin with global conversations about Torah to provide context for the texts they will learn. They discuss questions such as what is the Torah, who wrote it, what is special about its language. Students learn about the *shalshelet hamesorah* (the chain of our tradition) and how the Torah has been passed down from generation to generation. Students are encouraged to see themselves as the next link in the chain of our Jewish heritage.

Using the *Chumash* curriculum of Lehavin Ulehaskil the children learn a great number of skills which will assist in a smooth transition from workbook-based learning to learning *Chumash* from the original text. Second graders learn how to locate *perek* and *pasuk* (chapter and verse). They learn how to identify and translate common prefixes, suffixes, and root words. They differentiate between feminine/masculine and plural/singular forms of nouns and verbs. They develop a beginner's biblical vocabulary. Student learning is aided by Lehavin Ulehaskil's extensive workbooks addressing a wide range of foundational skills, smartboard lessons, songs, charts, posters, and flashcards. By the end of the year, they can read and translate simpler Torah texts with support.

The milestone occasion of receiving their first *Chumashim* is celebrated with *Chagigat HaChumash*, an event attended by parents and grandparents.

Halacha

Second graders review the laws and customs of each Jewish holiday as well the holidays related to the State of Israel, going into slightly greater depth and detail. This is done

through writing activities, songs, and projects. We use the iTal Am curriculum to enhance their Hebrew Language skills related to the holiday that is being learned.

Students also learn about the proper *brachot* (blessings) that are said before and after eating. While students already recited brachot in previous years, second graders learn the various *brachot* said over different foods, including some that may seem tricky!
Second graders learn that many of the kind, caring behaviors that have been encouraged throughout their lives also have a basis in Jewish law. They discuss *halachot* of *i*nterpersonal relationships (*bein adam l'chaveiro*) such as proper speech, respect and honesty.

Students begin to appreciate the relevance of *halacha* in every aspect of their daily lives.

Hebrew Language

The iTalAm curriculum focuses on the theme of *Tov baKita u-vaBayit (Chayey Yom Yom)*, highlighting vocabulary and conversation that is used in the classroom and in the home. Through the integration of storybooks, interactive games, songs, and more, students learn how to talk and write about the cycle of their day, from dressing and washing up to putting their homework folders in their backpacks. The iTalAm materials go beyond basic language skills to include and emphasize the Jewish laws and customs associated with everyday life. Daily reading at home helps develop reading and comprehension skills.

Students learn how to build complex sentences in the present tense using the correct form of the verb. Students become familiar with Hebrew pronouns and how to recognize and correctly use various word forms, differentiating between male and female, plural and singular forms of nouns, adjectives, and verbs. By the end of second grade, students will know all of their question words and be able to understand classroom instructions, and engage in simple conversations with their peers and their teacher.

We continue to use MaDYK to monitor Hebrew reading progress.

Integrated Literacy Curriculum

Literacy (including speaking, listening, reading, and writing) is how children learn everything. In second grade, students continue to strengthen their foundational skills, including phonemic awareness, phonics and word analysis skills. We help each student, knowing that the process is not always linear, and that success will come from patient guidance. Building on the work of first grade, students progress to learning the remaining syllable types, r-controlled vowels, diphthongs, schwa vowels, and less common sound spellings. Additionally, students learn about contractions and homophones. Students continue to decodable stories that contain the phonics patterns that have previously been taught. This allows students to practice new skills, one at a time, while they are supported by words that they can already read themselves.

However, as phonics patterns are mastered, second graders are able to independently read a large variety of texts.

In second grade, students continue to develop fluency and comprehension using fiction and nonfiction texts. They build their ability to read longer multisyllabic words and read with increased expression. Students develop their ability to identify story elements, key ideas and details in a text and to use those to summarize longer passages. They learn to work on making inferences and predictions, analyzing character development, and acknowledging differences in characters' points of view. Students learn to compare and contrast stories and authors' works. Throughout the year, students engage with informational texts, using their skills to author their own original works.

Our integrated thematic curriculum units form the core of an academic program that focuses on big ideas to illuminate central and universal themes of human understanding throughout history. Teachers expertly use daily read-alouds and author-studies to help foster an appreciation for literature and develop their students' vocabulary, language comprehension, active listening, discussion, and analytical skills. Similarly, when writing, teachers introduce conventions that will make their writing more legible, but always support and celebrate students' desire to tell stories beyond their current means. Additionally, our large and diverse classroom libraries provide opportunities to explore topics of interest and cultivate a love of reading. In second grade, students are guided by the year-long theme "Changes and Patterns Over Time." Under this umbrella they explore the topics:

- Feelings and emotions
- Story: What comes next?
- Earth's changes
- New York City, changes over time
- Series book clubs
- How can I make a difference In my community?

Classroom discussions are taken to the next level. Students learn and practice "talk moves" for class discussion such as agreeing, disagreeing, asking follow up questions, adding on details or support for an opinion, and discerning between relevant and irrelevant details. These moves are modeled and practiced orally and then are implemented in students' writing.

Informational and narrative writing will focus on sequencing events with a beginning, middle, and end using temporal words to signal event order. Focusing on the paragraph level, students begin to understand how to introduce a topic in writing and provide a sense of closure at the end. As the year progresses, they work on adding details, including those which describe setting, actions, thoughts, and feelings. Students begin to distinguish between an opinion and an argument, learning how to identify relevant facts

and text-based evidence to support their ideas. Second grade students continue to work on mastering print handwriting as they will begin cursive instruction in third grade.

Throughout reading, writing, and discussion, students work on relevant grammar, spelling, and punctuation conventions. They also build their content-specific vocabulary by doing word-studies related to their reading and writing, work on the mechanics of writing with proper letter formation in the appropriate left to right orientation as well as conventional spelling and punctuation.

Social Studies

Social studies topics are integrated with literacy. Students build on their first grade civics knowledge in the first unit "Feelings and Emotions." Here they examine a wide range of emotions in different contexts and explore how feelings can drive decisions and also change over time. This content allows students to begin to understand the perspectives of others and broaden their concept of community. The second unit "Story: What Comes Next?" students learn the importance of sequencing events. Students learn this skill to narrative stories before applying it in the fourth unit "New York City: Changes Over Time." The sixth and final unit allows students to reflect on their place in the community as they explore ways that they can improve the world around them.

Science

Second graders develop an understanding of the cyclical processes in nature through learning about the properties of matter. Specifically focusing on water, students apply that knowledge to the changes that occur on Earth's surface. Their understanding of geology and physical science supports their study of changes in New York City over time.

More broadly, students apply concepts of patterns, cause and effect, structure and function, engaging in argument from evidence, and stability and change as cross-curricular ideas. This science literacy skill building is coupled with interactive, discovery oriented science labs.

Math

Second Grade mathematics is an extension and deepening of the basic skills introduced in first grade, allowing students to work with increasingly larger numbers. Students work with various representations of numbers, using math manipulatives. These tactile and visual models help develop students' understanding of the process behind the numbers and develop an internalized sense of mathematical relationships. The concept of place value is critical as students work with adding and subtracting numbers up to 1,000. Students are introduced to the concept of multiplication and division and learn to multiply by 2, 3, 4, 5, and 10. In addition to this algebraic thinking, students also deepen their understanding of shapes, money, and measuring length, mass, and time. They also learn to represent data on graphs and line plots.

STEAM - Robotics

Students will continue their study of robotics through coding of the Dot and Dash robots. The collaborative, problem solving, and reflective processes will become more lengthy and complex. Students will expand their programming vocabulary, becoming fluent in the concepts of sequencing, looping, events, and parameters. Additionally, students will learn to add events in their code to create alternate sequences for one robot.

Students in second grade will be encouraged to use trial and error. In second grade we will build frustration tolerance and persistence as students will be encouraged to make incremental changes to their programs in order to achieve the desired outcome. Students will learn the importance of running their code and testing their solutions as often as necessary to solve the problem. These skills will help students grasp this fundamental concept of STEAM learning and students will be encouraged to extrapolate them for all forms of learning in all disciplines.

Music

Second graders will begin writing their own original lyrics and melodies, sharing their songs with their classmates and at an end of year celebration.

Second grade students review lessons about understanding how instruments make music. They continue to practice rhythm and beat to familiar songs as well as new ones. Like first graders, students learn curriculum-based songs, connecting their general studies learning with music. In addition, students follow the NYC Musical Explorers Curriculum through Carnegie Hall Education. In this program, students learn about current musicians from around the world, exposing them to the artists' cultures, languages, and music; connecting geography, social studies, and literacy with music. Students learn to sing in various languages and twice a year they see an interactive performance with the musicians they have learned about, singing, and moving to the songs they have practiced.

Visual Arts

Second graders engage in a deep study of the works of Henri Matisse and the movement of Fauvism. They begin to learn about color theory as present in Matisse's work and in the work of Van Gogh's Sunflower and Chagall's stained glass windows. Students work with multiple media exploring ceramics, watercolor, drawing, collage, and painting. Frank Stella, Paul Klee, and Native Peoples' art are explored and imitated.

Students travel to a NYC art museum such as the Metropolitan Museum of Art with their teacher to view, sketch, and discuss the artists they learned about in class and develop their understanding and appreciation of art.

Third Grade

Tefilla

Third grade *tefilla* builds on the habits established in first and second grade. Students continue to use the siddur to incorporate *tefilla* as a daily practice. The third grade focus is on the *amidah* (*shmoneh esreh*). Students learn each *bracha*, both how to read it accurately and fluently as well as what each *bracha* means. Particular focus is placed on *shma koleinu*, which is an opportunity to have one's personal *tefillot* in mind. We cultivate an understanding that *tefilla* is a conversation between us and Hashem through which we develop our relationship as individuals and as a community. We talk about praying for ourselves and for others, including reciting *tehillim* for the sick. On "*tefilla* Thursday'' we focus on meaning in *tefilla*, looking deeply at what the words mean, who wrote it, and how it became part of our regular *tefilla*. We utilize the Ani Tefilla Curriculum, which is designed to instill a love for Hashem and understanding of the deeper meaning of *tefillot*.

Chumash

Third graders review and develop the skills acquired in second grade in order to become fluent Hebrew readers and skilled *Chumash* learners through traditional text-study, group and partner activities and projects, drama, and art.

Students become more familiar with Chumash text and build the skills needed to dissect and break down *pesukim*. We do so by heavily focusing on the skills-based approach of the Lehavin Ulehaskil program. Students build a knowledge bank of important shorashim - root words - in Chumash and learn to identify them in various formats (with different prefixes, suffixes, tenses, etc.). We balance the skills-based lessons with a clear understanding of the Torah narrative in *parshiyot Chayei Sara*, *Toldot* and *Vayeitzei* in *sefer Breishit*. We also discuss the relevance and application of the ideas of the *pesukim* to our daily lives. Chumash study is enhanced by the introduction of the study of *Rashi*. Students learn to recognize *Rashi* script letters, and begin to read *Rashi* as a commentary to *Chumash*. Students are introduced to the idea that *Rashi*'s commentary is offered in response to an often unasked question. Students expand their critical thinking skills as they learn to ask what could be troubling *Rashi*. Students learn to also find the *dibbur hamatchil* and use *lashon hapasuk* and go inside *Rashi* to find answers.

We celebrate the milestone of beginning *Rashi* learning with *Chagigat Rashi*, a family event that celebrates the life of our foremost *meforash* and our children's Torah learning accomplishments.

Halacha

Halacha study is focused on the laws of brachot. Students begin by learning the source of the brachot in the Torah, and discussing the importance of having *Hakarat Hatov* to

Hashem and to those around us. The centrality of gratitude to Jewish values is repeated throughout the year.

Students practice identifying the proper bracha to recite at various times, what to do if there is a *hefsek* (interruption) between a *bracha* and its related action, and what to do if one forgets to say a *bracha*. Students also practice reciting brachot that are said before and after eating (including the seven special species), on nature (such as viewing a rainbow or lightning), and upon arising in the morning. Students learn to recite these accurately and fluently at the appropriate times.

Over the course of the year, students also learn some basic laws of *Kashrut*, Shabbat, and *chagim*, along with the deeper meaning of these. A study of Yediyot Klaliyot enriches and broadens students' knowledge of interesting *halachot* and *minhagim* as well as the *parshiyot* of the Torah and other basic fundamental ideas and concepts within Judaism.

Any study of *halacha* would not be complete without attention to *mitzvot bein adam l'chaveiro*. Conversation and study of *middot tovot* are an essential component of third grade learning. Each week, students learn a new *pitgam*, and discuss how it is relevant in their families, among friends, at school, and in the world at large.

Hebrew Language

The iTalAm curriculum focuses on the theme of *B'Hatzlacha*, highlighting vocabulary and conversation about being successful at home, with friends, and in school. Through the integration of storybooks, interactive games, songs, and more, students learn how to talk and write about their experiences. Using meta-cognitive strategies, students talk about their learning, memory, and personal strengths. Daily reading of TalAm storybooks at home helps develop reading and comprehension skills.

Students further develop their skills in building complex sentences in the present tense using the correct form of the verb. Using accurate verb-noun-adjective agreement is more of a focus. Students build sentences using their rapidly expanding vocabulary and begin to learn how to conjugate verbs in the past tense. By the end of the year, students have vastly expanded their ability to authentically engage in Hebrew conversation.

We continue to use MaDYK to monitor Hebrew reading progress.

Integrated Literacy Curriculum

Literacy skills grow more nuanced and complex in third grade. Structured literacy instruction focuses on complete mastery of phonics and spelling patterns. Once mastered, students begin to learn about morphology, or the meaningful parts of words.

In integrated units, students are taught to identify the elements of fiction and non-fiction texts, narrator's or a character's point of view, to describe character traits and

motivations, to notice cause and effect, to compare and contrast characters and plot, and other critical reading skills. Students learn to locate relevant information in a text and cite it when sharing an answer or opinion. Third graders learn to differentiate between facts and opinions and to infer, make educated predictions, and draw logical conclusions. Teachers expertly use daily read-alouds and author-studies to help foster an appreciation for literature and develop their students' vocabulary, language comprehension, active listening, discussion, and analytical skills.

In third grade, students are guided by the year-long theme "Similarities and Differences in the World Around Us." Under this umbrella they explore the topics:

- Recognizing and Celebrating Differences
- Folktales and Fables from Around the World
- Animal and Plant Adaptations
- Why Do We Live in New York State?
- Author Study: Patricia Polacco
- Social Issues Book Clubs

Third graders' vocabulary expands rapidly as they read a greater volume and variety of texts. They begin to utilize more sophisticated linking words in their speech and writing, and begin to differentiate between the conventions of academic English and casual conversation; they develop context-specific vocabulary, writing, and speech patterns. Students broaden their knowledge of different parts of speech as well as spelling vowel patterns.

Writing in third grade also takes a leap forward. Students expand sentences by writing detailed simple, compound, and complex sentences. As their written pieces become longer, they work on crafting informational and persuasive writing which includes introductory and concluding statements with strong details. They organize ideas by using outlines or other organizational structures.

Social Studies

In the first integrated unit, students learn about the importance of recognizing and celebrating differences in people. This dynamic unit fosters discussions about the similarities among all people and the differences that make us each unique. The second unit allows students to explore fables and folktales from cultures around the world and over time. Students learn about the important role that culture plays in the stories that we tell. In the fourth unit, students familiarize themselves with map keys, the four coordinate directions, and focus on their map skills. They discuss the purposes of different types of maps and design maps for particular audiences. Third graders focus on the geography of New York State. Students later learn about the fifty states, ending the year with a state report.

Science

In third grade, students continue to develop their understanding of the process of investigation through learning about how and why animals and plants adapt to their environments. This science literacy skill building is coupled with interactive, discovery oriented science labs.

Math

Math computation is extended to addition and subtraction up to 10,000 and multiplication with 1, 2, and 3-digit numbers. Students begin to work with fractions, and deepen their study of measurement with mass and volume, area and perimeter, and time. Students advance their representation of data with increasingly sophisticated graphs and line plots. They also extend their prior geometric knowledge by learning about angles and lines in two dimensional figures.

STEAM

Students in the third grade will explore and develop their problem-solving skills through coding. Throughout the course, students will work in groups and engage in collaborative discussions. Students will begin the year by learning about more complex and powerful variations of loops than they learned in prior years. Students will then continue by learning about events and adding event handlers within their code.

Students will learn how to define and understand the nature of conditional statements. Students will explore how they use conditional statements within their own lives on a regular basis, and they will then learn how to implement these conditionals into their programs to solve problems. Throughout this process students will develop and compare many solutions to challenges that they face and they will evaluate these solutions based on the criteria and constraints of the problem.

Music

Third graders start the year off listening to Prokofiev's "Peter and the Wolf". Through this classical piece, students will learn about the specific tonal qualities and "character" of various instruments, and notice how music can tell a story. They will move on to learning to play melodies on a glockenspiel and learn to recognize basic rhythmic notation. Third graders will also learn curriculum based songs and write their own original music, ending the year in a music festival showcase.

Visual Arts

Art this year focuses on color theory and style and begins with a study of Claude Monet. Students learn about ancient art including Egyptian hieroglyphs, Judaica, and Greek and Roman decorative art. Their study spans time as they also look at artists like Degas, Picasso, Munch. As every year, students work in mixed media to create art inspired by their studies.

Students travel to a NYC art museum such as the Metropolitan Museum of Art with their teacher to view, sketch, and discuss the artists they learned about in class and develop their understanding and appreciation of art.

Fourth Grade

Tefilla

In fourth grade, students take increasing responsibility for their *tefilla*. Teachers tell inspirational stories and provide *chizuk* (encouragement) so that the impetus for *tefilla* becomes internalized. Enthusiasm and active participation are cultivated as students begin to see their *b'nei mitzvah* over the horizon. Textually, classes focus on the morning blessings and the blessings before saying *Shema*. Students are introduced to more of the physical dynamics of *tefilla* (when to stand, sit, and bow) as well as various *halachot* related to *tefilla*.

Chumash

This year we will continue to develop *Chumash* study skills as students complete their learning of *Sefer Bereishit*. Using the L'havin U'Lehaskil curriculum, students study the following Parshiyot in depth: *ויחי, ויגש, מקץ, וישב, וישלח*. The culmination of the Lehavin U'lehaskil Chumash curriculum happens in fourth grade and includes a review of all the skills learned since second grade. The Lehavin U'lehaskil methodology focuses on three different core areas: content, skills, and values. Students are encouraged to become lifelong *Chumash* independent learners as they continue to improve their reading, translating and *Rashi* skills. Students learn the foundational *Tanach* skills needed to become independent *Tanach* learners.

In addition to our *Chumash* curriculum, students will learn the *Parshat Hashavuah*. Students will review the weekly *Parsha* and will learn a Dvar Torah relating to a particular theme each week.

Navi

Students begin their study of *Nav*i with Sefer Yehoshua in fourth grade. Through our study of *Sefer Yehoshua*, students will explore how the mantle of Moshe's leadership is passed to *Yehoshua*. Using the Lehavin ULehaskil curriculum, students will learn about the division and conquest of the Land of Israel while connecting the story to the map of Israel. Students become independent learners by integrating the vocabulary and skill knowledge gained from learning *Chumash* into our *Navi* classes. Particular emphasis is placed on gaining a deep appreciation for the greatness and holiness of our land. Students will express their understanding of the Sefer through creative projects while discovering how the lessons from *Sefer Yehoshua* are relevant to us today.

Halacha

The discussion of *halacha* deals with the holidays and observances through the cycle of the Jewish year. Core skills include

- understanding laws and customs relating to relevant Jewish Holidays
- understanding the relevance and application of *halacha* in our daily lives
- writing *Divrei* Torah based on texts learned in class

Hebrew Language

The iTalAm curriculum focuses on the theme of *HaKitah HaMeuchedet*, highlighting vocabulary and conversation about being unified as a community, including behavior, social conventions like manners and etiquette, and understanding personal internal and external qualities. Through the integration of storybooks, interactive games, songs, and more, students learn how to talk and write about their experiences. Daily reading of TalAm storybooks at home helps develop reading and comprehension skills.

Students further develop their skills in building complex sentences in the present and past tense using the correct form of the verb. They are also introduced to the future tense. A strong emphasis is placed on using accurate verb-noun-adjective agreement. Though students have been working with pronouns since first grade, they begin to develop an understanding for when pronouns are used in Hebrew and when they are implied by the form of the verb or adjective. By the end of the year, students have vastly expanded their ability to authentically engage in Hebrew conversation.

Integrated Literacy Curriculum

Fourth graders continue to build on many of the skills introduced and built upon in early grades. However, as fourth graders' capacity for language and understanding grows, their work grows more precise.

Structured literacy shifts from phonics to morphology, or the study of the meaningful parts of words. Students learn about prefixes, suffixes, and root words. Their language use in speech and writing is expected to be more specific and sophisticated. Students read across a variety of genres, such as fantasy, historical fiction, and nonfiction books and feature articles to expose them to a variety of text types and structures. As we read, we learn to paraphrase, infer, evaluate, take perspective, and make connections.

In fourth grade, students are guided by the year-long theme "We Are Problem Solvers." Under this umbrella they explore the topics:

- Identifying and Managing Conflict
- Fantasy
- Science Researchers
- America's Beginnings
- Historical Fiction Book Clubs

- Values - What's Important?

Multi-paragraph writing plays a large role in the fourth grade Language Arts curriculum. The students write responses to literature, narratives, book reports, and research reports. They go through the writing process and set goals for improvement with each draft. At the sentence level, students work on enhancing their writing by experimenting with a range of sentence structures.

Social Studies

Fourth grade students learn about how people manage conflicts. They then apply this knowledge to the history of America's beginnings, focusing on the Revolutionary War in and around New York State. Students explore nonfiction texts and historical fiction texts set in the era. In the final unit of the year, students use fiction and non-fiction texts to identify important societal values and examine how those values have impacted their own lives.

Science

In fourth grade, students continue to develop their understanding of the process of investigation through learning about energy. Students become science researchers as they work to generate and answer questions about energy and how it is present in our daily lives. Students will discuss how energy can be transferred from place to place by sound, light, heat, and electric currents. They will develop a subject-specific vocabulary and work with complex texts describing energy and the conservation of energy. This science literacy skill building is coupled with interactive, discovery oriented science labs.

Math

Fourth Grade is a big growth year in mathematical learning. As children's capacity for abstract thinking begins to grow, mathematical concepts also become less concrete. Students continue to work with multiplication and division, layering on the concepts of multiples and factors. Prior work with fractions is expanded to include mixed numbers. Place value understanding is developed to include decimals. Measurement gains more complexity as students learn to convert from one unit to another. Area and perimeter now include shapes with unknown sides and composite figures. Complexity is also added to prior learning about angles and lines, shapes, symmetry, and the representation of data using tables and graphs. With their sophisticated mathematical thinking and skills, students are ready for middle school.

STEAM

Students in the fourth grade will learn about animation and how to develop their storytelling skills. Students will work in groups to brainstorm ideas as well as manage responsibilities for their group. Students will then use software on the computer to create comics to tell their stories.

Students will strengthen their classroom knowledge of geometry, by exploring different patterns, as well as two and three-dimensional figures using building tools. Students will create patterns, develop an understanding of reflecting and rotating those patterns and then build them using tools in the lab. This project will require students to realize ideas, create models, evaluate these models and make adjustments, if necessary, based on those evaluations.

Students will review their understanding of conditional statements in coding and begin to explore the creation and implementation of functions to solve problems within their programs. Students will be given a number of challenges to create programs collaboratively utilizing functions to solve problems.

Music

Students will have a more in depth look at the instruments of the orchestra through Benjamin Britten's "Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra". They learn to recognize the different families of the orchestra. Students expand on their understanding of rhythmic notation and begin reading notes on a staff through basic recorder practice. Students have the option to continue to write their own original songs and record them using the garage band program, ending the year with their songs available for streaming on an MDS Songwriters' page online.

Visual Arts

As students' fine motor and abstract thinking skills improve, we focus on fine art techniques including color mixing, composition, movement, and perspective with acrylic paints. Learning begins with a deep study of van Gogh's "Starry Night." Students also learn about the work of O'Keefe, da Vinci, Magritte, and others. They study the mixed media cave paintings of America's first peoples as well as other cultural arts. Students' art production becomes more sophisticated as their skills improve. You can see our students' depictions of O'Keeffe-inspired flowers and their renditions of "Starry Night" on display in our lobby.

Students travel to a NYC art museum such as the Metropolitan Museum of Art with their teacher to view, sketch, and discuss the artists they learned about in class and develop their understanding and appreciation of art.

Fifth Grade

Tefilla

Tefilla in middle school is focused on preparing students for a lifetime of *tefilla*. Each year, *tefilla* will focus on three components:

- Understanding the meaning of the texts in the *siddur* and why they have been included in our *tefillot*
- Being able to accurately recite and/or lead the prayers and have a functional understanding of the basic *halachot* of *tefilla*

- Connecting the practice of *tefilla* to our relationship with Hashem, as individuals, as a local community, and as the Jewish people.

Deep textual *tefilla* fifth grade focuses on the texts of *birchot hashachar* and *p'sukei d'zimrah*.

Chumash

Fifth grade *Chumash* puts into practice all the skills learned up until this point with a focus on *sefer Shemot*. Using their reading skills to translate *pesukim*, students are encouraged to come up with questions on each *pasuk.* Special emphasis is placed on the types of questions students ask, focusing on word choice, repetition, or ambiguity in a *pasuk*. The goal is to understand fully what the Torah is trying to teach us so that we can apply it to our daily lives. Fifth grade students spend considerable time sharpening their *Rashi* skills, as *Rashi* becomes an indispensable part of their *Chumash* learning.

In addition to their *Chumash* curriculum, students learn the *Parsha HaShavua* each week, reviewing the key points in the *Parsha*, while focusing on one key theme.

Navi

Fifth grade *Navi* continues with the study of *Sefer Shoftim*, the next book after *Sefer Yehoshua*. Through our study of *Sefer Shoftim*, students will explore how leadership of the Jewish people evolved after the death of Yehoshua, the successor of Moshe. Thematically, students explore the *Ma'agal Ha'hitnahagut*, the cycle of behavior that repeats itself throughout the *sefer*. Particular emphasis is placed on the qualities of a Jewish leader and how leaders help people in their time of need. Students will gain an appreciation for the faith of the *Shoftim* and how that translates into strength of the Jewish nation. Students will express their understanding through creative projects and draw relevant connections between the lessons and daily life.

Toshba

Fifth graders begin their formal study of Torah *Sheba'al Peh* (abbreviated as Toshba), the Oral Tradition, through the study of *Mishna Brachot*. The year begins with an introduction to *Toshba*, including the key understandings that the ideas in *Toshba* were given on *Har Sinai* to Moshe *Rabbeinu* and were transmitted orally until written down by Rav Yehuda HaNasi in the third century. They learn that the *Mishna* is the foundation for the *emara*, which provides the basis for the *halacha* we practice today. Students are introduced to the *Tana'im*, the rabbis of the *mishnaic* period and authors of the *Mishnayot*.

Through deep textual study and analysis, students learn the concepts of *sha'ot zmaniyot* (*halachic* times), which help us learn about the specific times for *tefillot* throughout the day. Students learn about the centrality of the *Shema* and *Amidah* to Jewish practice and its role in daily *tefillot*. Students discover the textual roots of many daily practices related to praying and reciting blessings, as well as the critical role of *kavannah* (intention) in *brachot* and *tefilla*.

Students develop the vocabulary and concepts that support study of *Toshba* such as *reisha, seifa, kashia,* and *tanna kamma*. They learn to organize a *Mishna* into distinct parts, such as speaker, case, *halacha*, and reason for the *halacha*. They begin to compare and contrast two different rabbinic texts on the same topic and find textual support for differing rabbinic opinions.

Halacha

Prior to fifth grade, students' study of *halacha* is primarily focused on lived experiences on Shabbat and holidays. For the first time, fifth graders begin learning from a formal *halacha* text, the *Kitzur Shulchan Aruch*, written by Rabbi Shlomo Ganzfried. Students learn the *halachot* involved in getting up in the morning, saying *brachot*, and *tefilla* by looking at selected excerpts from the *halachic* text. Before they begin, the genre of *halachic* texts is explored to develop an understanding of what the *Kitzur Shulchan Aruch* is and how it should be used. As they learn, students discuss *halacha*'s roots in the *pesukim* of the Torah and *Torah She'baal Peh*, and the process by which the rabbis have developed the *halachot* that we observe today. Students become familiar with the difference between *minhag* and *halacha*, Sephardi and Ashkenazi observances, as well as diversity of practice within the *halachic* system.

Each year, teachers take the opportunity to discuss *halachot* related to Shabbat, holidays, and topics that arise through classroom discussions. These may or may not be related to the main focus of the *halacha* class, but always add depth and meaning to our students' appreciation of our Jewish practices.

Hebrew Language

The iTalAm curriculum focuses on the theme of *HaKitah HaChoshevet*, highlighting vocabulary and conversation about students' internal landscape. Through an integration of storybooks, interactive games, songs, and more, students learn how to talk and write about their thoughts, feelings, values, and aspirations. Ongoing reading of TalAm storybooks and supplementary texts at home helps develop reading and comprehension skills.

As students expand their vocabulary, they also continue to use proper tense, gender, and number forms for Hebrew nouns, verbs, and adjectives, becoming more fluent in their speech and writing. Many of the skills introduced in previous years find fuller expression as their comfort with Heberw grows.

Language Arts

Fifth grade Language Arts studies integrates reading, writing, research, vocabulary development, grammar instruction, and public speaking. Fifth grade students study several genres, surveying nonfiction and fiction sources. The texts vary from short stories and articles to full-length fiction and nonfiction works. Students also have

independent reading responsibilities which correlate to the genres and elements covered in class. Students will learn and apply literary terms and will respond critically to fiction and nonfiction. As they read independent choices and class-assigned texts, students will expand their ability to read critically. Fifth graders work on making connections across texts and subjects as well as connecting their reading to their lives and the lives of others. Students use texts to improve their ability to discern meaning, identify point of view, develop means of comparison and contrasting, and understand tone and mood based on the author's craft. A fundamental goal is discerning themes through mentor texts.

In writing, students work on all phases of the writing process, from prewriting to editing and publishing. Students work toward writing cohesive, clear, and sophisticated four- and five- paragraph essays in addition to building and supporting constructed responses and journaling. Students work on fundamental grammar skills including language mechanics and editing in order to refine written expression.

Students grow their vocabulary through the introduction of curriculum-embedded language (from math, social studies, literature, and science), as well as through a dedicated vocabulary text - the Sadlier Vocabulary Workshop book. They also journal progress through each class novel or nonfiction text, including the need to track and look up new words and technical vocabulary.

Social Studies

The fifth grade program revisits many topics introduced in fourth grade but expands the area of focus from New York State to the United States as a whole. In our study of American history, we work with the text *Taking the High Road to Social Studies*. This incorporates a survey of the geography of our country and the history of America, beginning with a study of the First Americans. Students get an overview of American history and government. The civics unit includes a focus on the framework of our government as well as the election process. Students are introduced to Document Based Questions (DBQs) through which they analyze and interpret one or more primary source documents.

Most days begin with a conversation about the day in history This helps promote awareness of local, national, and international events over time. This is coupled with frequent study of current events, which helps students understand today’s news in historical context.

Math

Fifth grade math adds complexity to topics introduced in fourth grade. Students become proficient in the addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division of fractions and decimals. They learn processes such as prime factorization and order of operations. They are introduced to exponents and algebraic thinking.

Students will work with numbers in various forms,using manipulatives, navigating word problems, and converting units. As their arithmetic fluency improves, students will engage in more and more applied mathematics through generating, interpreting, and analyzing data, including calculating mean, median, and mode. Students will also be challenged to utilize their literacy skills as they engage in careful reading of word problems and expand their math vocabulary.

Science

Fifth graders will review their understanding of the building blocks of matter, including its structures and properties. Students will describe what is observable about matter with the naked eye, and develop an understanding that all matter is composed of particles too small to be seen. Just as they explored the conservation of energy in fourth grade, they will explore the conservation of matter.

Students will learn that all living things are made up of cells, which is the smallest unit that can be said to be alive. They will differentiate between unicellular and multicellular organisms, both of which need energy to live. Students will explore the conditions required by different life forms for survival (such as air, water, food, light, minerals, etc). Life functions such as body repair, growth, maintaining homeostasis, and more are discussed. Through hands-on activities in the lab as well as simulated experiments or videos, students develop a dynamic understanding of the living world around them.

Towards the end of the year, they will be introduced to the Earth's orbit, its gravitational force, the impact of the sun and sunlight, as well as an understanding of daylight and seasons as a function of the Earth's rotation and orbit.

Throughout their studies, students focus on designing experiments and changing variables in the experiment. Students learn how to make a data table and represent data by plotting graphs.

STEAM

Students will discover the laws of motion and angular momentum through the use of building tools. Students will then deepen their understanding of simple machines by exploring and creating various types of simple machines. Students will test their prototypes and develop ways to improve them.

After developing an understanding of prototyping and analysis, students will further hone their skills by learning to design and transform their two-dimensional designs into three-dimensional design using the Tinkercad program.

Students will explore and learn about circuits and electricity. After developing an understanding of what a circuit is, students will build and test circuits of their own.

Music

Students start the year learning how to listen to and describe classical music by learning music terms and their proper use. They learn to recognize every instrument in the orchestra by what it looks like and by how it sounds. Students then expand on their recorder use by following the Carnegie Hall Link Up program where many NYC schools learn to play, sing and move to the same pieces of music, each year with a new theme, ending in a culminating show at Carnegie Hall where students play and sing along with the orchestra.

Fifth graders also have the option to continue to write their own original songs and record them using the garage band program, ending the year with their songs available for streaming on an MDS Songwriters' SoundCloud page online.

Visual Arts

Students explore drawing skills of shading, composition, and optical illusions as they study artists including MC Escher, Bridget Riley, Walt Disney, Toshiko Takaezo, and A.A. Milne. We discuss and create Op Art, graphic designs, post-impressionist and expressionist art, functional art, and Judaic Illuminated Letters/Manuscripts. As always, we work with mixed media through which we can paint, sculpt, and draw. Fifth grade students are introduced to artwork and artists that address social themes. Students explore portrayals of people who are similar to and different from themselves, enabling them to grapple with questions of justice and identity. Artists such as Norman Rockwell, Faith Ringgold, Romare Bearden, Pablo Picasso, and Margret Burke-White aid in this exploration.

Students travel to a NYC art museum such as the Metropolitan Museum of Art with their teacher to view, sketch, and discuss the artists they learned about in class and develop their understanding and appreciation of art.

Sixth Grade

Tefilla

Tefilla in middle school is focused on preparing students for a lifetime of *tefilla*. Each year, *tefilla* will focus on three components:

- Understanding the meaning of the texts in the *siddur* and why they have been included in our *tefillot*
- Being able to accurately recite and/or lead the prayers and have a functional understanding of the basic *halachot* of *tefilla*
- Connecting the practice of tefilla to our relationship with Hashem, as individuals, as a local community, and as the Jewish people.

Deep textual *tefilla* sixth grade focuses on the texts of birchot *kriyat shema* and *shemonah esrei*, including any differences between *shacharit* and *mincha*.

Chumash

In sixth grade *Chumash*, we will be focusing on learning the stories, *mitzvot*, and lessons connected to *Sefer Bamidbar*. The book of *Bamidbar* will see the transition of the Jewish people from a nomadic tribe into a full fledged nation, and all of the challenges and tribulations that come along with these changes. The role of Moshe will develop and be challenged from many varying angles, *Am Yisrael* will develop a new normal, as they acclimate to life in the Sinai desert while being surrounded by daily miracles, and so many new *mitzvot* and ways of life will be introduced to this new fledgling nation.

The Students will also be exposed to new skills and will further develop the *Chumash* skills that they have been honing from earlier grades. This year will place a particular focus on the role of *Rashi*, understanding why he asks certain questions, how to read and translate the text, as well as connecting the text to the commentary that is presented. The students will also gain a greater appreciation for the varying levels of text, deciphering whether a story or idea is classified as the simple meaning of the *passuk* (*pshat*) or presented to teach a lesson that can be extrapolated from the *pasuk* (*drash*). While becoming more familiar with the storyline and narrative of the Torah, they will strengthen familiar skills such as navigating the *Chumash*, translation skills, and other key skills that will carry them closer to the goal of mastering *Chumash*.

Navi

In sixth grade *Navi*, we begin the study of *Shmuel Aleph* which focuses on the lives of Shmuel, Shaul, and David. In these action packed *perakim*, the students will be exposed to challenging topics such as the ideal form of government for *Am Yisrael*, the difficult relationship of *Am Yisrael* with the nation of *Amalek*, and the rise of kingship as the predominant form of leadership for *Am Yisrael* going forward for hundreds of years. The friendship of David and Jonathan as well as David's tenuous relationship with King Shaul will also portray the various forms of relationships that are encountered by us all in our own lives. The students will see the historical continuity from *Sefer Shoftim* to *Sefer Shmuel* as a unified narrative of the Jewish people.

Toshba

In sixth grade, students transition from studying *mishna* to learning *Gemara*. To ease this transition, students learn masechet *brachot*, the *Gemara* developed from *mishna brachot* which they studied in fifth grade. This allows students to return to familiar topics, concepts, and vocabulary while acquiring a new skill set. Students learn to identify the different parts of a page of *Gemara* (using the traditional Vilna *Shas*), including locating the *mishna*, *Rashi*, and the *Tosafot*. They learn the difference between a *mishna* and a *beraita*, between *tanna'im* and *amora'im*.

Students will begin to learn how to break down a *sugyah* into its component parts. Students begin to develop an Aramaic vocabulary by studying frequently occurring

words in context as well as developing a comprehensive *Gemara* vocabulary wordbank beyond the text. Perhaps most importantly, they develop an understanding of *machloket* (disagreement) among *amora'im*, which is the foundation of *Gemara*'s dialectical style.

Halacha

In sixth grade, students' study of *halacha* continues to study *halacha* using the *Kitzur Shulchan Aruch.* Students learn the halachot related to Shabbat and holidays by looking at selected excerpts from the *halachic* text. Before they begin, the genre of *halachic* texts is explored to develop an understanding of what the *Kitzur Shulchan Aruch* is and how it should be used. As they learn, students discuss *halacha*'s roots in the *pesukim* of the Torah and Torah *She'baal Peh*, and the process by which the rabbis have developed the *halachot* that we observe today. Students become familiar with the difference between *minhag* and *halacha*, Sephardi and Ashkenazi observances, as well as diversity of practice within the *halachic* system.

Over the course of this year, students will become more comfortable navigating the text of the *Kitzur Shulchan Aruch*, including locating *halachot* using its system of *se'if* and *siman*.

Each year, teachers take the opportunity to discuss *halachot* related to Shabbat, holidays, and topics that arise through classroom discussions. These may or may not be related to the main focus of the *halacha* class, but always add depth and meaning to our students' appreciation of our Jewish practices.

Hebrew Language

When students enter sixth grade, they transition from the Tal Am Hebrew curriculum to Bishvil Ha-Ivrit, a dynamic, comprehensive Hebrew language program for students in grades 6-12. The program leverages print and digital materials enriched with new media and sophisticated interactive activities to engage students and advance their learning. Students are introduced to the many aspects of the language – ranging from rabbinic texts to modern Israeli songs, from historical documents to comics – as they develop active language skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing.

Sixth grade students encounter short texts in Hebrew,and learn to navigate these passages with teacher support. Though they encounter unfamiliar words and phrases, students build the skills and knowledge to identify what is familiar and use context clues to help define unfamiliar words or get a general sense of meaning. Students are encouraged to speak in Hebrew, even when their Hebrew may be incorrect or mixed with English. Teachers establish a risk-tolerant environment in which mistakes are viewed as integral to learning.

Students expand their Hebrew vocabulary and grammar in context through reading passages, watching videos, and listening to songs and spoken language. They are also assigned ten new words to learn each week.

Just as students learn in a multi-modal approach, they are assessed through written tests, class conversations, interactive online activities, and projects. Diverse learners have opportunities to show what they have learned in a variety of ways.

Bishvil Ha-Ivrit is deeply grounded in Israeli culture, and students learn about Israeli life and history throughout.

Language Arts

In sixth grade Language Arts, we are grounded in the mission of helping students to activate and embrace their voices and creative sparks as writers and thinkers, exploring and analyzing culturally diverse texts that broaden students' world-views and perspectives, and sowing the seeds for a lifelong love of reading. The course is replete with opportunities for students to boost their mastery of writing mechanics, grammar, spelling, and vocabulary. Other activities embedded in the curriculum include weekly journal writing, Socratic seminars, as well as regular independent reading and "book talks" - a modern approach to book reports. Each unit of study has a theme and an anchor text. Texts include *Bud, Not Buddy*, *Immigrant Kids*, *Esperanza Rising*, and *The Odyssey*. Themes of growing up, finding a sense of home, and the hero's journey echo throughout the works.

Social Studies

Social Studies is focused on three key components: Ancient History, Global Knowledge (geography skills, current events, etc.), and Civics. Students' study of ancient history begins with the Neolithic Revolution and takes students on a journey to Ancient Egypt, Greece, and Rome. Students explore aspects of culture, literature, religious beliefs and practice, archeology, military history, ecology and agriculture, evolving technology, and more. There are many opportunities to highlight connections between students' learning in Social Studies with other subjects. For example, each year students explore Egyptian hieroglyphic art as well as the connections to the foundational Jewish texts about the Jews' experience in Ancient Egypt. Students' historical study of Ancient Greece is complemented by their literary study of *The Odyssey*.

Though we are immersed in learning about the ancient world, we frequently learn about the present through our weekly study of current events. Students read the news independently and work together to discuss and analyze current events. They use the adaptive program, Newsela, which helps ensure that content is grade-appropriate and written at an appropriate reading level. The program is adaptable and tracks student growth over time.

Most assessments are project-based and offer opportunities for students to be creative while demonstrating their mastery of key standards.

Math

In Sixth Grade, students make use of the fluency developed in computing with decimals and fractions throughout Fifth Grade. Students begin working with very large and small numbers, including exponents, powers of ten, and scientific notation. They learn to manipulate these numbers in standard, written, and expanded form which helps to further refine their number sense. Being able to conceptualize very small and very large numbers helps create a solid foundation for later study of advanced mathematical concepts.

Throughout the year, students manipulate fractions and decimals in a wide variety of ways, including comparing, rounding, and converting from one form to another or one unit to another. Students learn the concepts of greatest common factor and least common multiple (GCF and LCM), prime factorization, and rules of divisibility which further develop their number sense. They become fluent in all operations with decimals and fractions.

Relevant applications of mathematical concepts are used throughout the year. Students are introduced to ratios, proportions, and percentages which enables them to explore sale prices, taxes, odds, unit rates and similar real life uses of math.

Science

Sixth grade picks up where fifth grade left off, with a study of space systems. Students will review the Earth-Sun-Moon system and understand the interdependencies of these. They will develop an understanding of gravity and motion in space and learn about the scale properties in the solar system.

Students will then take a closer look at our home planet, Earth, with a study of its history. Students will be introduced to the geologic time scale and how geologic processes have changed the Earth's surface over time. Plate tectonics will be introduced as a precursor to the students' subsequent study of weather. Students will revisit and deepen their knowledge of the cycling of the Earth's materials, including water. Students will explore the role of energy (including the sun's energy) in these processes. Students will learn about the uneven distribution of Earth's resources and will understand them within the context of historical geologic shifts.

To complement their understanding of how energy, water, and materials impact the Earth, students will examine the impact of air, including high and low pressure, temperature, and wind. Students will examine the impact of these on atmospheric and oceanic circulation. All of these concepts come together as students look at the causes of

global warming. They will revisit the cycle of matter and impact on ecosystems, and see the factors contributing to the rise of global temperatures.

As the end of the year approaches, students will examine the human influence on environmental factors, both concerning humans' contribution to global warming and human consumption of natural resources.

STEAM

Sixth grade students will explore the fundamentals of bridges and the various types of bridges. Using both simulation software and the building tools, students will build bridges of their own. They will design and build these bridges with an understanding of the cost of each component of their bridge with a goal of keeping their cost as low as possible. Given that challenge, students will research, brainstorm, and design solutions, as well as use related scientific concepts and mathematics in order to design and develop their model.

Building on their understanding of simple machines that they developed in fifth grade, students will explore the concepts of a Rube Goldberg Machine. Students will propose, design, build, evaluate, and modify their Rube Goldberg Machines.

Students will begin to work with Lego EV3 robotics to further develop their knowledge of coding from previous years, as well as strengthen and discover concepts that have been learned or will be learned in the math and science classrooms. Students will develop a deeper understanding of the differences between the scientific method and the engineering method.

Visual Arts

In middle school, we build on the lower school awareness of and participation in the arts to include an added emphasis on Jewish culture and history. We accomplish our goals by deepenging skills in the Principles of Design and Elements of Art, along with expanding student knowledge of art history, art materials and aesthetics. Sixth graders work toward creating portraits of remarkable figures in Jewish history. These have been on display in New York's Center for Jewish History.

Seventh Grade

Tefilla

Tefilla in middle school is focused on preparing students for a lifetime of *tefilla*. Each year, *tefilla* will focus on three components:

- Understanding the meaning of the texts in the *siddur* and why they have been included in our *tefillot*
- Being able to accurately recite and/or lead the prayers and have a functional understanding of the basic *halachot* of *tefilla*

- Connecting the practice of *tefilla* to our relationship with Hashem, as individuals, as a local community, and as the Jewish people.

Seventh and eighth grade students have *tefilla* together in a halachic minyan in the beit midrash. Over the course of seventh and eighth grades, teaching focuses on the texts of *Mussaf*, *Hallel*, *Rosh Chodesh*, Shabbat & *Ma'ariv*. As boys become *bar mitzvah*, they are taught the *halachot* of tefillin, *tallit*, and serving as *shaliach tzibbur*. Careful attention is paid to differences in family *minhag* and differing *halachic* practice.

Chumash

Students explore select parshiot in sefer *Vayikra*. Beginning with *Parshat Kedoshim*, where a multitude of mitzvot are discussed and analyzed, our students learn about exciting *mitzvot* that come up on a day to day basis. The *Chagim* and the Torah's description of our holidays are discussed in *Parshat Emor*. *Korbanot* are briefly discussed in *Parshat Vayikra*. *Tzav* and *Shmini* include relevant topics like kashering utensils and kosher animals, while also discussing the dramatic death of Nadav and Avihu as the *mishkan* was inaugurated.

What is especially exciting about this year is that our students are given their first *Mikreot Gedolot Chumash*. This means that they begin analyzing the text with use of multiple *mefarshim* including *Rashi, Seforno* and *Ibn Ezra*. They will further develop the skills that they gained in 6th grade, including translating a basic comment of *Rashi*, and making intertextual connections. They will strengthen familiar skills such as navigating the *Chumash*, translation skills, and extracting the key lessons from the text. In addition, they will begin to compare and contrast the differing styles of *pshat* versus *derash* when analyzing the words of different *mefarshim*.

Navi

In seventh grade *Navi*, students continue to develop their *Tanach* learning skills through learning about David *Hamelech*'s trials and tribulations in *Shmuel Bet*. In these dramatic *perakim*, David asserts himself as king when Shaul's descendants claim the right to the throne. David wages wars and the Jewish people finally experience a serenity they had not experienced in years. David wants more; he dreams of building the holy *beit hamikdash*. Though this does not come to fruition, David continues to lead with passion and fervor for the glory of Hashem. Students gain a better appreciation for why we praise David with the phrase, David *Melech Yisrael Chai Vekayam.*

Students learn from David's example how to persevere despite facing challenges put in one's path by others and one's own personal temptations. Analysis of David's decisions from a moral and ethical point of view lead to vibrant debates in class. Students learn to disagree firmly yet politely.

Toshba

With an understanding of the relationship between Mishnah and *Gemara* and the role of the classic commentators already in place, in seventh grade *Toshba* we focus on key understandings and analysis tools for the role *Gemara* plays in the development of *Halacha*. Similarly, students develop their understanding of *Gemara* as a source of Halacha and as a record of interpreting the written Torah. Lastly, an emphasis on independently navigating *Gemara* texts are part of the core skill set acquired in this year.

Students do so through study of tractate *Megillah*, which places an emphasis on daily *Halachic* practice in areas of prayer, synagogue rituals, and festivals.

Halacha

In seventh grade, students return to topics previously studied in the *Kitzur Shulchan Aruch* and deepen their understanding by using a new halachic text, the Mishna Berurah, written by the Chofetz Chaim, Rabbi Yisrael Meir Kagan. Students learn about the importance of the Chofetz Chaim as a talmid chacham and a posek. As always, students discuss halacha's roots in the pesukim of the Torah and Torah *She'baal Peh*, and the process by which the rabbis have developed the halachot that we observe today. Students revisit differences between *minhag* and *halacha*, Sephardi and Ashkenazi observances, as well as diversity of practice within the *halachic* system.

Each year, teachers take the opportunity to discuss halachot related to Shabbat, holidays, and topics that arise through classroom discussions. These may or may not be related to the main focus of the *halacha* class, but always add depth and meaning to our students' appreciation of our Jewish practices.

Hebrew Language

Already familiar with Bishvil Ha-Ivrit from sixth grade, students expand their skills, gradually increasing the length of passages they can read and write as well as expanding their ability to work in Hebrew independently. They progress from reading short passages with support to reading page-long passages on their own and from writing a short response to writing full paragraphs. Students work to improve accuracy and fluency when speaking in Hebrew.

The ongoing multi-media approach helps differentiate for different student learning needs. As students work on written passages, projects, or other assignments, they can access a variety of resources to support their learning.

Bishvil Ha-Ivrit is deeply grounded in Israeli culture, and students learn about Israeli life and history throughout.

Seventh and eighth grade students currently have the option of studying Chumash and Navi in special Ivrit b'Ivrit tracks. As such the curriculum for 7th and 8th grade Chumash and Navi operates on a two year cycle.

Language Arts

The Language Arts classroom should be a place where students gain the knowledge and learn the skills they need to succeed in school and beyond. This environment will enable students to become lifelong readers and skilled writers.

The 7th Grade Language Arts curriculum has four main areas of focus: literature, writing, vocabulary, and language usage. Students will read, discuss and respond in writing to literature including novels, short stories, plays, and poetry. As they read, students expand their ability to think critically and creatively about a literary problem. Major works often read in seventh grade include *Among the Hidden, The Outsiders, The Westing Game* and *Roll of Thunder Hear My Cry*. These works are complemented by shorter works of fiction and non-fiction.

Our writing curriculum includes components of the Judith Hochman Basic Writing Skills process. This concrete method helps students apply writing strategies to compose multi-paragraph essays, responses to literature, and summaries. Students become proficient in journal writing as well as descriptive and expository composition. Expository writing is the form of writing assigned most frequently in Language Arts classes and across the curriculum. Seventh graders advance in their ability to write an expository paragraph or composition when asked to define, discuss, criticize, list, compare, explain, or summarize.

Alongside literature and writing-embedded vocabulary, grammar, and usage work, MDS also utilizes *Vocabulary Workshop Book B* by Sadlier. Using class texts, worksheets, and online resources, they continue to develop increasingly sophisticated and clear sentence structure with diverse and precise usage of punctuation, pronouns, adjectives, adverbs, and prepositions.

Social Studies

Grade 7 Social Studies marks the beginning of a two-year study of American history. Starting with background information about Pre-Columbian America, the course proceeds through early American history and concludes with the study of Jacksonian Democracy. Students use a variety of intellectual skills to demonstrate their understanding of major ideas, eras, themes, developments, and turning points in the history of the United States and New York. Students develop a sophisticated understanding of how America developed as a nation, including its treatment of indigenous peoples and the impact of American development on the natural landscape.

Much of the learning is research based, and students are coached to identify reliable and unreliable online and print resources. Students develop note-taking habits, analyze and interpret primary source documents, begin to answer document-based questions, and learn how to create a basic works-cited page.

The main text used is “History Alive! The United States Through Modern Times,” which is supplemented with a variety of online and print resources with a special focus on primary source materials. Newsela and Junior Scholastic are used to study current events, and connections to our American history study are highlighted.

Math

Seventh Grade math continues where Sixth Grade left off. Students review divisibility rules and order of operations, strengthening their number sense. They continue working with fractions and decimals and prime factorization. Students explore prime numbers and discover concepts like prime deserts, prime twins, relatively prime numbers, and Goldbach’s conjectures. While this is fascinating on its own, its function is to build students' understanding of our number system.

With their strong number sense and arithmetic fluency, students begin their formal study of Geometry, which will include calculating area, perimeter, volume, and surface area of various two and three-dimensional shapes. They will learn how to use a compass and protractor to measure angles and construct polygons. In particular, a rigorous study of triangles helps students in their STEAM work designing and building multi-dimensional structures.

Students will be introduced to the mathematical idea of functions and work with input/output machines. This will lay the groundwork for their study of linear equations. Students will explore coordinate geometry, including graphing linear functions and parabolas. They will see how these concepts underlie design and engineering, and will also have the opportunity to explore math as an art form using the graphing calculator Desmos.

Science

Seventh grade students study a life sciences curriculum. The year begins with an introduction to living organisms. Beginning at the cellular level, students learn the cell parts and functions. Students learn about the similarities and differences between plant and animal cells and study various cell processes, including photosynthesis, respiration, fermentation, and mitosis.

After studying life at its micro level, students explore larger cellular systems, including the human body systems. Students will gain an appreciation for how each individual

body system works together to keep the body alive and healthy. Genetics, inheritance, and trait variability will also be studied.

Human health is further contextualized through a study of human ecosystems including group behavior, social interactions, and the interdependence of various elements in any ecosystem. Biodiversity and adaptation of populations over time will be explored.

STEAM

Students will pick up where sixth grade left off, by using Lego EV3 robots to solve more complex problems. These problems will require students to utilize various sensors within their solutions as well as make modifications to the original designs of their robots.

Students will explore and work with lasers. Through the use of experiments, students will learn the concept of assembling, operating, and explaining the operation of simple open and closed-loop electrical, electronic, mechanical, and pneumatic systems. Students will record their observations and discoveries and create presentations which they will then present to their classmates and teacher.

Students will develop an understanding of graphic design through the use of Photoshop and interior and exterior design software. Through learning how to use these software programs, students will utilize equipment and software in order to integrate several types of information and create good quality designs. Before designing using the exterior and interior design software, students must first develop and submit plans, including drawing and measurements and details of how their design meets the needs as specified in the challenge.

Visual Arts

Seventh grade begins with a series of lessons on Israel, maps, and topography, as well as research into interesting features of Israeli life, culture, and history. Students also review and acquire skills for multimedia art, including sketching, painting, and sculpture. With this background, students engage in a true studio art experience, each working towards his or her own portrayal of the land of Israel and one of its key features. The teacher works individually with each student to monitor progress and provide guidance. Other works of art, including ceramic tile painting and portrayals of Biblical heroes are also part of the curriculum.

Eighth Grade

Tefilla

Tefilla in middle school is focused on preparing students for a lifetime of *tefilla*. Each year, *tefilla* will focus on three components:

- Understanding the meaning of the texts in the *siddur* and why they have been included in our *tefillot*
- Being able to accurately recite and/or lead the prayers and have a functional understanding of the basic *halachot* of *tefilla*
- Connecting the practice of tefilla to our relationship with Hashem, as individuals, as a local community, and as the Jewish people.

Seventh and eighth grade students have *tefilla* together in a *halachic minyan* in the *beit midrash*. Over the course of seventh and eighth grades, teaching focuses on the texts of *Mussaf*, *Hallel*, *Rosh Chodesh*, Shabbat & *Ma'ariv*. As boys become *bar mitzvah*, they are taught the *halachot* of *tefillin*, *tallit*, and serving as *shaliach tzibbur*. Careful attention is paid to differences in family *minhag* and differing *halachic* practice.

Chumash

In 8th grade our students have the ability to take a step back, and analyze the Torah from a birds eye view, or better said Moshe's perspective. In studying *Mishneh* Torah (Deuteronomy), which literally means the repetition of the laws of the Torah, our students gain a keen appreciation for which areas are critical elements in being a Torah observant Jew. The *Aseret Hadibrot*, *Shema* and *Vehaya* all provide our students with the fundamental concepts related to our moral, ethical and spiritual responsibilities as Jews. We then discuss select *mitzvot* detailed in *Parashat Re'eh*, *Shoftim* and *Ki Tezeh*. We conclude the year with the emotional and stirring blessings Moshe imparts on the Jewish nation before his death, in *Parshat Vezot Habracha*.

In terms of skills building, our students continue to analyze the text with their personal *Mikreot Gedolot Chumash*. In addition to studying *Rashi*, *Ibn Ezra* and *Sforno*, we also highlight select comments of the *Ramban* as well as modern day *Mefarshim*. They will further develop the skills that they gained in 7th grade, including translating pesukim, translating a basic comment of *Rashi* and extracting the key lessons from the text. A heavy emphasis is placed on Project Based Learning, in which students learn by actively engaging in real world and personally meaningful projects. This allows our students the opportunity to gain the necessary skills for independent research as well as collaborative learning.

Nach

In eighth grade we provide our students with a smorgasbord of exciting and thought-provoking *seforim* in *Nach*. We begin the year analyzing the short, yet riveting Story of Yonah, a fitting way to enter the *Yamim Noraim* (High Holidays). We then transition to the 5 *Megillot*, starting with *Kohelet*, as we analyze the meaning of life from the perspective of the wise *Shlomo Hamelech* (King Solomon). We follow up with *Megillat* Esther, *Shir Hashirim*, Rut and conclude the year with *Eicha* as we approach the summer months. Each of the *Megillot* are learned around the time of the year in which they are read in shul, deepening the experience of the holidays for our students.

Throughout the year, our students are introduced to a broad array of characters and events, and employ strategies to understand and analyze the narratives. A heavy emphasis is placed on identifying and articulating the qualities of leadership as well as the different stages in the leadership of the Jewish people. As this is students' first formal exposure to *Ketuvim*, students explore the different characteristics of *Nevi'im* and *Ketuvim* and the relationship between them. The Jewish values and lessons gleaned from the text are applied to everyday life.

Toshba

Students begin to operate with a deeper understanding of the structure and mechanics of *Toshba* and develop their independence and comfort with navigating its core texts. This final year of *Toshba* learning at MDS orients itself toward analytical and conceptual thinking and helps students develop the skills necessary to begin reading and deciphering *Gemara* on their own.

A stronger focus on the classic commentators like *Rashi* and *Tosfot* will help our students develop reading skills for these more complex texts as well. Students will have the ability to use different strategies in translating a *Gemara* using context clues, key terms, and study aids.

This is all done within the framework of studying *Bava Metzia* and other tractates dealing with torts and civil law. Students use their skills to trace how *halacha* regulates our interpersonal relationships and responsibilities to other people's property. Students learn to anticipate the logic of the *Gemara* and deploy different strategies to understand its concepts.

Halacha

This year, we turn our focus from some of the more ritualistic aspects of *halachic* practice to some of the ways *halacha* informs our interactions with others. We use the Hesber *Bein Adam L'Chavero* curriculum and workbook which discusses the difference between *Mitzvot Bein Adam L'Chavero* (between a person and his friend) and *Mitzvot Bein Adam L'Makom* (between a person and God). Students learn the pesukim that provide an overarching ethos that governs *Mitzvot Bein Adam L'Chavero*, and trace the *halachot* from the Torah through modern halachic sources including the *Mishna Berurah*. Specific *halachot* such as visiting the sick or welcoming guests are connected to the personality traits (*middot*) that are part of good character. Students discuss the importance of chesed as it applies to family, friends, community members, and strangers.

This is an especially important middle school topic as interpersonal relationships become more complex for our students.

As in every year, teachers take the opportunity to discuss halachot related to Shabbat, holidays, and topics that arise through classroom discussions. These may or may not be related to the main focus of the halacha class, but always add depth and meaning to our students' appreciation of our Jewish practices.

Hebrew Language

Eighth graders progress in the Bishvil Ha-Ivrit program. Students continue to develop their skills as they encounter texts of increasing length and complexity. They are expected to read these texts independently, relying largely on context clues to make meaning when there are words they do not recognize. Students are encouraged to persevere when passages are difficult. Based on their reading or their personal knowledge and experience, students write complex sentences and paragraphs at a high level, with clarity and accuracy. By eighth grade, students' vocabulary should be substantial, and they should be capable of fluid conversation utilizing the correct tense, grammar, and syntax.

The ongoing multi-media approach helps differentiate for different student learning needs. As students work on written passages, projects, or other assignments, they can access a variety of resources to support their learning.

Many of our peer high schools utilize the Bishvil Ha-Ivrit program, so MDS students will be well prepared to succeed in high school.

Bishvil Ha-Ivrit is deeply grounded in Israeli culture, and students learn about Israeli life and history throughout.

Seventh and eighth grade students currently have the option of studying Chumash and Navi in special Ivrit b'Ivrit tracks. As such, the curriculum for 7th and 8th grade Chumash and Navi operates on a two year cycle.

Language Arts

The Language Arts classroom should be a place where students gain the knowledge and learn the skills they need to succeed in school and beyond. This environment will enable students to become lifelong readers and skilled writers. Eighth Grade students should graduate equipped for the challenges of high school.

The 8th Grade Language Arts curriculum has four main areas of focus: literature, writing, vocabulary, and language usage. Students will read, discuss and respond in writing to literature including novels, short stories, plays, and poetry. As they read, students expand their ability to think critically and creatively about a literary problem. Major works often read in eighth grade include *Animal Farm, Of Mice and Men, To Kill a*

Mockingbird, and *Night*. These works are complemented by shorter works of fiction and non-fiction.

Our writing curriculum includes components of the Judith Hochman Basic Writing Skills process. This concrete method helps students apply writing strategies to compose 5-paragraph and multi-paragraph essays, responses to literature, and summaries. Students become proficient in journal writing as well as descriptive and expository composition.

Expository writing is the form of writing assigned most frequently in Language Arts classes and across the curriculum. Eighth graders advance in their ability to write an expository paragraph or composition when asked to define, discuss, criticize, list, compare, explain, or summarize.

Alongside literature and writing- embedded vocabulary, grammar, and usage work, MDS also utilizes *Vocabulary Workshop Book C* by Sadlier. Using class texts, worksheets, and online resources, they continue to develop increasingly sophisticated and clear sentence structure with diverse and precise usage of pronouns, adjectives, adverbs, appositives, and prepositional phrases.

Social Studies

In eighth grade, American History picks up where the 7th grade curriculum left off exploring the causes of the Civil War and proceeding through the post World War II era, the Cold War, and the Civil Rights movement. Through this study, students are exposed to a variety of cultures that are important to American democracy through exploring the experience of various immigrant groups. Immigrant groups' unique contributions to American society are highlighted and challenges they experienced are explored. Students develop a nuanced view of the African American experience in America from slavery through reconstruction, Jim Crow, and the Civil Rights era. As part of their World War II study, students engage in Holocaust studies, with a dual focus on how the Holocaust was experienced globally and as a uniquely Jewish experience.

Students in eighth grade have to take on all of the research skills that they first learned in 7th grade. Additionally they need to analyze primary sources, respond to multiple document based questions, and unify the responses into a well- written research based essay. Eighth graders need to write thorough works-cited pages and will be introduced to creating annotated bibliographies from their research sources. 8th graders are also encouraged to participate in the National History Day Competition.

Math

Eighth Grade is divided into three levels. Level One is a comprehensive Eighth Grade course. Level Two covers some of the NY State Ninth Grade math regents curriculum. Level Three is an accelerated class covering the entire New York State Ninth Grade math regents curriculum.

Level One studies signed numbers, solving algebraic equations, exponents, geometry, and probability and statistics. There is an emphasis on solving verbal problems. As the year concludes, students will revisit percent and probability. Practical applications to daily life, athletics, and current events are explored.

Level Two studies Quadratic Equations in depth. Understanding, solving, and graphing quadratic equations require students to rely heavily on the skills they have developed. Students must think critically to recall and selectively apply mathematical concepts involving fractions, decimals, the order of operations, factorization, and coordinate planes. Students graph more complex linear equations and inequalities, as well as derive equations of a line or parabola based upon the graph. In addition to the complex mathematical knowledge students gain through this study, they are also gaining critical practice in solving multi-step problems, juggling variables, and working methodically that will serve them in any subject. Upon completion, students will be thoroughly prepared for Ninth Grade geometry in high school.

Level Three studies Algebra, Geometry, Trigonometry, Radicals, Graphing Linear, Parabolic and Exponential functions, Probability and Statistics. *Algebraic Topics* include Set Theory, exponents with variables, distance, consecutive numbers and coin verbal problems, radicals, quadratic factoring, solving quadratic equations and verbal problems using quadratic equations.
Geometry Topics include formal proofs of congruent or similar triangles. Using coordinate geometry, the students learn to graph linear, parabolic, and exponential functions representing growth and decay. *Trigonometry Topics* include study of the principles of sine, cosine and tangent. *Probability Topics* include probability of two or more events including drawing of tree diagrams. *Statistics Topics* include Mean Mode, Median, Range, Frequency Histograms, Scatter Plots, Cumulative Frequency Histograms, Quartiles, and Box-Whisker plots.

Students who complete this class are placed in an accelerated Ninth Grade class or in a Tenth Grade math class in their respective high schools.

Science

Eighth graders will do an in-depth study of physical science. They will once again revisit the structure and properties of matter, but will delve much more deeply - looking for the first time at atomic structure and particle motion.

Their understanding of atoms will enable them to study chemistry for the first time. Students will encounter and experiment with the elements (including the periodic table), chemical properties and reactions. They will see how conservation of matter and energy appear in reactions. They will observe how energy is transferred through chemical and physical processes as heat, kinetic, or potential energy. They will explore energy transfer

in electric circuits. They will also experiment with electric and magnetic forces, gravitational interactions, and electric and magnetic fields.

STEAM

Students in eight grade will enhance their understanding of circuity and coding by working with Arduino circuit boards. Students will learn the fundamentals of a circuit board and all that entails. Students will learn about energy and resistors and how energy can be transferred by electrical currents. Students will begin by learning the basic blink program in order to explore the Arduino environment. Students will then learn about the differences between analog and digital inputs and signals. Students will develop that understanding by incorporating LED lights and push buttons into their circuit boards and code.

Visual Arts

MDS eighth graders are already familiar with the studio art experience. They dive right into creating works of art. Students once again learn about Israel as they focus on the Negev desert. Aspects of landscape art are identified, and techniques for portraying landscapes are explored. Students then create their own landscape painting focusing on one aspect of the Negev. Because eighth grade students are thinking about their identities and their futures as they apply to high school, they have an additional opportunity to reflect on themselves as they are guided to construct their own self-portraits. As a gift to the community they are about to depart, the year ends with painting of ceiling tiles, which then adorn our school

MDS Bridge Program

Overview

The MDS Bridge Program allows the opportunity for students with classified language-based learning difficulties to be a part of our mainstream school while addressing the language and academic needs. Students learn in small classroom environments while participating in nonacademic areas with their peers. With our small self-contained classes, modified curriculum, multi-sensory infused methods and individualization, we are able to provide a rich academic program while continuing to mainstream students to meet social and emotional needs. In grades one through six, self contained classes consist of bilevel grades with a maximum of twelve students Each class has one certified head teacher and an assistant teacher. In addition, a licensed speech therapist, occupational therapist and school social counselor are employed by Manhattan Day School to provide related services as mandated by the Department of Education (DOE) Individualized Education Program (IEP) or as determined by the MDS team. In grades seven and eight, MDS extends the Bridge Program to an integrated learning model where students mainstream in most subject areas with a support teacher available throughout classes and for individual study skills sessions. This allows

students to learn with and from their peers while preparing them for their high school experience post eighth grade.

Curriculum Modifications

Teachers in the Bridge Program accommodate students' learning styles by individualizing and modifying Manhattan Day School's grade level curriculum guide. Our teaching philosophy emphasizes direct instruction of basic skills as building blocks in reading, writing, reading comprehension, mathematics, social studies, science, computers, and organizational skills. In addition, there is an emphasis on building Judaic Studies skills, including Hebrew reading and writing, Hebrew Language, Chumash, laws and customs, Dinim, Gemara and Mishna.

The curriculum introduces content material, while stressing the development of skills. The strategy is further enhanced with the use of a multi-sensory approach, whereby different modalities (visual, auditory, kinesthetic) are introduced into the learning process to reinforce and strengthen the students' learning potential. The students learn skills, build upon them and learn various strategies to implement them. As a result, the students learn to function independently and transfer the skills to all content areas.

With formal and informal assessments in all subjects, teachers provide instruction in small differentiated groups. Assessments may include the following: individual psycho-educational assessments, DOE provided IEPS, The Key Math, Orton GIllingham based reading assessments, running records, Gates MacGinitie assessments, teacher made materials and more. Teachers address students' needs by meeting their academic skill level in each subject area. Unique teaching methods are employed to build strong foundational skills in all areas.

Teaching Modifications include:

- Introduction of concepts and lesson in a multi-sensory manner
- Scaffolding and chunking of materials
- Repetition of instruction
- Rewording or rephrasing
- Utilizing manipulatives and hands-on activities
- Interactive presentations on an iPad or Smartboard

A child is eager and ready to learn when they feel confident and have a strong sense of self. With a focus on developing a students self esteem, regulation of emotion and encouraging social interaction students are ready to take more academic risks and focus on lessons presented. This is emphasized further by directly teaching self-advocacy skills, time management skills, executive functioning skills, and pragmatic skills.

Judaic Studies

Manhattan Day School's Judaic Studies curriculum covers relevant subjects including Bible Studies, Talmud, Weekly Torah portion, and culture. Our teaching philosophy emphasizes direct instruction of basic skills as building blocks in reading, writing, comprehension, critical and analytical thinking and organizational skills. The program is designed to enhance students' cognitive skills and strategies that are necessary in all studies. The curriculum introduces Judaic content material, while stressing the development of these foundational skills. The strategy is further enhanced with the use of a multi-sensory approach, whereby different modalities (visual, auditory, kinesthetic) are introduced into the learning process to reinforce and strengthen the students' learning potential. The students learn foundational skills, build upon them and learn various strategies to implement them. As a result, the students learn to function independently and to transfer the skills to all content areas throughout the school day, thus becoming better learners.

The primary goal is to teach the understanding and appreciation of the text. Much time is devoted to teaching reading comprehension skills applicable to the study of any written text including: identifying main ideas and details, sequencing, recalling and retelling information, noticing anomalies and deviations in the text, understanding question and answers from the text, conflict resolution and inferential thinking skills. Another goal is to focus on Hebrew language instruction and to help students improve their language skills. All skills and strategies are taught with a multi-sensory approach.

Hebrew Reading/Language

Applying the same multi-sensory techniques as in English reading, students learn letter-sound recognition, pronunciation and fluency. In addition, Hebrew language is studied to increase skills in speaking, writing and comprehension. Our teachers promote good usage and pronunciation, vocabulary, organization of writing and grammar rules. Handwriting is taught to improve penmanship, proper letter formation, line spacing and transcribing., thus improving visual motor integration.

Tefilla

The goal of learning and participating in *tefilla* is for students to become active participants in the Jewish communal life Through song and repetition, students gain familiarity with the daily *tefillot.* Initially, *tefilla* is teacher guided in small group instruction. Students create their own *siddur* as they learn each *tefilla*. Students learn at a slower pace with the goal of mainstreaming by third grade.

Chumash/Weekly Parsha

Following the mainstream curriculum and integrating the Lehavin U'Lehaskil curriculum with teacher made materials, the Bridge program focuses on the quality of skills versus the quantity. Worksheets are presented in a variety of ways to repeat skills without students becoming overwhelmed or disinterested to learn root words, prefixes and

suffixes, vocabulary, verb conjugation, sequencing and build comprehension skills. Various interactive posters and games are used as well.

Navi

The study of *Navi* (Prophets) is introduced in 5th grade. While the text skills developed in *Chumash* study are useful here, the emphasis is on the story line and the moral lessons derived from it. Students continue to develop skills to recall and retrieve information, sequence events, and respond to basic and critical thinking questions both orally and in writing.

Toshba

The study of Torah *Sh'baal Peh* with the addition of *Mishnah* begins formally in the fifth grade. It is an introduction to learning from the text of our Rabbis and allows students to become familiar with text, language and style as it becomes a major core subject in the mainstream. Laws relating to daily concepts are studied.

Halacha

The main focus of *halacha* is to teach skills and customs which allow students to understand and practice in their daily lives both in school and at home. Using the Jewish calendar as a guide, each Jewish holiday is taught through a rich multi-sensory approach. Other topics are introduced based on the mainstream timeline. Projects to enhance gross and fine motor skills are implemented. Culminating programs, activities, or projects that include both a hand on component and a written assignment bring the whole unit of study together. The students connect and take ownership of both the project and knowledge to share at home with their family as it is very important for students to feel the home and school connection.

General Studies

Reading

Based upon the language philosophy of LETRS® (Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling), and Orton-Gillingham, we utilize an explicit, systematic, sequential, multi-sensory approach to develop basic reading, spelling and handwriting skills. Associations will be developed between the individual sounds in words, or phonemes (auditory), the letter symbols, or graphemes (visual) and the motor pattern for writing symbols (kinesthetic). As each new phonics pattern, high frequency word, or language convention is taught, students practice the skill in context using decodable readers matched to their ability.

The approach to the reading program is an inclusive one. Through language rich read-alouds, students are able to build their vocabulary and comprehension, including important skills such as questioning, predicting, drawing inferences, and other types of critical thinking. With a new emphasis on listening and speaking as well as reading and writing, numerous methods, approaches and strategies will be utilized to involve all

students in the reading / writing process. Guided reading, charts, classroom libraries, and authentic texts will be integrated within the program. Science and social studies are integrated into the reading curriculum. Similarly, while students develop foundational skills in writing, rich read-alouds are used to explore the craft of writing by discussing how authors use language for different purposes. Writing portfolios will record students' progress as their skills develop.

Language Arts

Students improve decoding strategies by enhancing word attack skills and context clues. Group and individual reading and writing experiences include mini lessons, guided and shared reading and independent reading.

There is an emphasis on building vocabulary both textual and pragmatic. Students are taught to utilize learned vocabulary, synonyms and antonyms. The main goal is to have students become independent and active learners.

Writing

Students develop skills in writing starting with a simple sentence→ add detail→ short paragraph→ 3 paragraph→ 5 paragraph. Graphic organizers, sentence starters, visual cues and assistive technology are implemented to assist the students. Writing conventions are also stressed with proper grammar, usage, spelling and enriched vocabulary. Writing portfolios will record students' progress as their skills develop.

Math

Following grade level curriculum, students in the Bridge program acquire foundational skills, numeracy and number sense. Manipulitives, games, daily practice and repetition is essential for students to learn math. Each concept is broken down and introduced in small parts. Establishing math vocabulary is essential to learning both computation and word-problem solving skills. Specific strategies used in the Bridge program include:

- Lexicons
- Glossary of formulas (recipes for multi step problem)
- Big graph paper
- Modify textbook and skills book by enlarging each problem, adjusting how many problems on a page
- Different modes of representation to explain a math concept

Science and Social Studies

Science and social studies are integrated into the reading curriculum.

Study Skills

This course of study skills is designed for the students in seventh and eighth grades who are mainstreamed in almost all subject areas. A teacher from the Bridge program

shadows students in mainstream classes and provides small group or one on one instruction.

Skills developed include the following:

- Organizational
- Note-taking
- Time-management
- Review sheet preparation
- Writing skills
- Study skills
- Strategies to approach assignments
- Self-advocacy