

# Arroyo Pacific Academy

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## Middle School Academic Bulletin 2023-2024



Courses are designed to assure success through middle school and into high school, with college as a clearly defined and achievable expectation. The Academic Bulletin contains a brief description of current courses and future courses. The curriculum may be custom-designed to meet each student's individual ability, English proficiency, and educational needs. The course of studies at Arroyo Pacific Academy instill good study habits and builds confident determination to ensure academic success for each student who works to his/her potential.

Arroyo Pacific Academy follows the guidelines of the California State Frameworks and the Content Standards adopted by the California State Board of Education to ensure a rigorous and meaningful educational program aligned with our Schoolwide Learner Outcomes for all students as Collaborative Workers, Critical Thinkers, Lifelong Learners, and Responsible Citizens. The academic program is characterized by:

- Small classes and caring teachers, putting the focus on the individual student
- A daily Study Hall to begin homework
- A holistic approach that includes enrichment classes, and character development in addition to the core academic subjects
- An emphasis on study skills, organization, and personal responsibility in preparation for high school

Students are able to experience a variety of enrichment courses in The After School Program to enhance their learning experiences: Currently, we offer Acting, Coding, English Enrichment, Math Enrichment, and Robotics workshops to both middle school and high school students. Students have an opportunity to discover their passions, and develop their strengths.

The academic program offers the depth and breadth of courses and support to meet the needs of all accepted students. The faculty places an emphasis on study skills, organization, and personal responsibility in preparation for high school. The school fosters student self-esteem through high expectations for each student and recognition of success. The course of studies provides a variety of course offerings to help all students to reach their goals and achieve our Schoolwide Learner Outcomes.

### ENGLISH DEPARTMENT

The Language Arts program covers the Common Core Standards through a complete curriculum focused on writing and grammar in print and digital formats. With writing instruction at the core, grammar, usage, and mechanics are learned in the context of the students' own writing. Throughout each core writing unit, the six traits of effective writing are integrated into the steps of the writing process.

#### 6<sup>th</sup> Grade

The curriculum is comprised of a variety of areas which reflect the interdisciplinary approach of the Middle School. Many of the novels selected reflect the cultures and civilizations studied in history, as in *The Golden Goblet* set in Egypt. Reading is novel-based, emphasizing reading comprehension through identifying main ideas, sequencing, cause and effect, and comparison. Many of those same elements are practiced in the writing section of the curriculum. Students learn several forms of writing, including strong 6- and 8-sentence expository paragraphs and creative writing and poetry. Other components of the well-rounded curriculum include separate vocabulary and spelling texts, as well as a grammar text which are all used to enhance and strengthen both reading and writing.

#### 7<sup>th</sup> Grade

A curriculum rich in a variety of literature has been selected because of its classic appeal, its relation to history, or its illustration of a genre being studied. For example, students read *The Samurai's Tale* in conjunction with the study of Feudal Japan in history and *I, Juan de Pareja* while studying the Renaissance. Students have their first exposure to Shakespeare and read *The Merchant of Venice*, a comedy. Students analyze various types of literature and the different forms of writing used in fiction, non-fiction, narrative, descriptive, dramatic, and poetic language and literary terms using many different cognitive skills. The curriculum includes the direct study of grammar and sentence structures to give a strong basis for writing skills, a strong contextual vocabulary program selected from the literature, as well as the skills needed to analyze a piece of literature. The writing program includes learning to write effective 11-sentence expository paragraphs, research papers in conjunction with other subject areas, creative writing and poetry.

### **8<sup>th</sup> Grade**

Building on the skills and practice begun in the previous grades, the curriculum continues to be enriching and challenging. The literature and writing skills have been selected because of their relevance to history. For example, while studying early New World settlements in history, students read *The Crucible* and *To Kill a Mockingbird* during the study of the Depression and post-Civil War segregation. Continuing their study of Shakespeare, students delve into the epic tragedy of *Romeo and Juliet*. The curriculum for analyzing literature, grammar, and sentence structures continues from the previous grades. The writing program includes learning to write effective five-paragraph expository essays, five-paragraph reports in conjunction with other subject areas, creative writing, poetry, and the narrative.

## **HISTORY DEPARTMENT**

### **6<sup>th</sup> Grade**

The curriculum for the study of ancient civilizations introduces basic themes such as the links between past, present, and future. Students become aware of their place in history, and what history is and the historical process. Understanding past cultures around the world through time has direct correlation with today's changing world. The curriculum covers time from pre-history to Roman times, as well as cultures around the world. The study is further enhanced by the study of geography to help students become aware of the effect geography has on human interaction and cultural development. This is achieved through a variety of means – projects (the archeological dig), field trips, video presentations, as well as lecture and group activities and computer civilization simulation. Proper research formats are introduced and applied to papers and projects.

### **7<sup>th</sup> Grade**

Seventh grade curriculum, beginning with the Fall of the Roman Empire and culminating with the Age of the Renaissance continues the study of World Civilizations begun in sixth grade. The subject areas are brought to life through interactive classroom activities such as participating in a Japanese Tea Ceremony. Designing a travel brochure, or preparing for a Renaissance feast. Students learn to think, question, and discover the answers to our world, then and now. Primary sources are introduced as part of the research process and literature, such as *The Canterbury Tales*, is used to help students experience what life was like for people of other places and times.

### **8<sup>th</sup> Grade**

The American History curriculum furthers previously taught study and writing skills, and strengthens the ability to apply critical thinking strategies. Several themes and concepts are simultaneously explored. These include ideals and practice of democracy, economic development, industrialization, cultural diversity, manifest destiny, World War I and II, and the role of the United States as a world power. Literature, such as *Killer Angels* and *Animal Farm* allow students to analyze forms of governments. Projects and field trips are planned to show the relevance of historical events to current times and to encourage an empathetic viewpoint toward people past and present.

## **MATHEMATICS DEPARTMENT**

Mathematics covers Common Core standards and important mathematics strands, such as number theory, algebra, geometry, measurement, data analysis, statistics, and probability – as appropriate to each level. Curriculum standards are met and, at the same time, teachers focus on specific student needs. Advanced students may take an Accelerated Math class with the grade level ahead if recommended by their teacher and test scores.

### **6<sup>th</sup> Grade**

The curriculum applies and delves more deeply into the mathematical material presented in previous grades, and provides the foundation necessary for success in Algebra. Emphasis is given to pre-algebra topics which focus heavily on simplifying and evaluating expressions, writing equations, and solving word problems that require ratio reasoning. Students continue to practice computation skills with whole numbers, decimals, and fractions. Geometry topics include problem solving involving area, surface area and volume, and identifying line segments, polygons, and circles. Data Analysis is explored through the creation of circle graphs, line graphs, and bar graphs, and statistics and probability through an understanding of variability. Great importance is placed on organization and self-help skills, including learning to use books and notes as resources for homework help. Projects and hands-on activities are used to reinforce concepts taught through direct teaching and group activities, all of which continue the development of mathematical skills at an optimum level.

### **7<sup>th</sup> Grade**

This year is primarily a continuation of the 6<sup>th</sup> grade curriculum where evaluating expressions with integers is mastered. Writing expressions is practiced and simplifying expressions using the distributive property is emphasized. The students learn to solve two-step, one variable equations. The linear equation and inequalities are introduced, and the concept of slope is explored. Problem solving is a significant component of the curricula, with emphasis placed on writing algebraic equations, such as area and volume formulas, and proportions to solve word problems. Geometry topics include identifying, classifying, and constructing angles, and understanding geometric relationships involving angles, surface area, and volume. Material is presented through direct teaching, projects, and hands-on laboratory explorations.

### **8<sup>th</sup> Grade**

The curriculum is a Pre-Algebra course. Students are introduced to fundamental algebraic concepts of variables and functions. Students learn to define, evaluate, and compare functions, and examples of situations that these functions model are presented. Expressions and equations are further developed through the use of radicals and integer exponents. Students continue to explore Geometry topics including congruence, similarity, Pythagorean Theorem, and volume. The Bivariate Data analysis in Statistics is introduced, and the number system is perfected. Emphasis is placed on justifying steps in the solution process, writing proper equations, drawing graphs, and applying computational skills and reasoning to evaluate numerical quantities.

### **Accelerated Math 6/7**

This course is offered to those incoming 6<sup>th</sup> grade students who have met qualifications based on a Math Placement Exam. The course is based on a blended learning model with engagement in conceptual understanding, mathematical discourse, and problem solving based on all Math 6 and Math 7 Domains. Students on this Accelerated Math track move on to a Pre-Algebra course (Math 8) in 7<sup>th</sup> grade and the Algebra I course in 8<sup>th</sup> grade.

### **STEPS Math 6, 7, 8**

This full-year course is taught during all 4 quarters. It provides students with an individualized learning program. Students take a placement test and results are used to create a curriculum designed to help them with concepts in which they show weakness. Students learn through one-on-one instruction and completion of worksheets covering K-5 material, basic geometry, probability, and pre-algebra. Students also continue their development of the math skills necessary for success in high school and college. Through this course students will be challenged to read word problems with understanding, compute with accuracy, and show work with clarity. They will also gain self-confidence as learners as they gradually develop their mathematical proficiency.

Science follows Next Generation Science Standards, an integrative approach covering earth science, life science, physical science, and engineering in each of the middle school grades. Students learn through hands-on experiments in our science lab. Labs include dissections, water bottle rockets, marble roller coasters, fermentation, extracting DNA from a strawberry, observing cells and pond life under a microscope, and more.

### **6<sup>th</sup> Grade**

The curriculum for this course is a general science course covering a variety of subjects. The topics emphasized are representative of Life Science, Chemistry, and Earth Science. It highlights the integration of science and engineering where students follow the engineering design process for themes such as global warming. For example, students research the effects of global warming on penguins and then design and build an igloo to protect the penguins. Observation, interaction and comprehension are three main components. As the scientific method is used as the basis of exploration, discussions, laboratory work, computer simulations, guest speakers, and field trips reinforce the text and lecture material. Simulating space travel at the Challenger Space Center provides an opportunity for stimulating the love of science.

### **7<sup>th</sup> Grade**

The curriculum continues the program with a general science course. Topics include the nature of science, geology (rocks and minerals), Life Science (cell genetics, plant evolution), conserving resources (matter and energy), and physical and chemical properties. The topics discussed will be explored through and experimented with laboratory demonstrations specifically tailored for every chapter covered throughout the school year. The hands-on work will be backed up with written competency of the concepts in the results and conclusions section of the lab notebooks. One of the interdisciplinary projects with English and Computer class is researching and writing a report on an invertebrate organism.

### **8<sup>th</sup> Grade**

The curriculum is a two-semester laboratory-oriented course which introduces middle-school students to fundamental principles of physics and chemistry to middle-school students. A conceptual approach is used to study the properties of water and matter, the periodic table, chemical reactions, forces, motion, work, power, energy, sound, light, electricity and magnetism. Students spend time weekly engaged in hands-on activities and demonstrations. Through this course, students will be challenged to apply mathematics principles, read scientific materials for content and understanding, write and present procedures and conclusions with clarity. Success in this course will prepare middle-school students for high school chemistry and physics courses.

## **WORLD LANGUAGES**

### **6<sup>th</sup> Grade**

There is a strong emphasis on learning Spanish vocabulary, correct pronunciation and spelling, and conjugating verbs in the present tense. Students review grammar concepts, idioms, and vocabulary daily through games and drills. To incorporate culture and knowledge of the Spanish-speaking countries, the students go on relevant field trips and do art projects, and students learn the names of all the Spanish-speaking countries. Trying to communicate in Spanish is emphasized by certain days on which students use Spanish exclusively in class dialogue. The basic skills are reinforced through a variety of activities, including writing and performing playlets for their classmates.

### **7<sup>th</sup> Grade**

This course focuses on the development of listening, speaking, reading, and writing competency in Spanish. Students communicate with each other utilizing the grammatical structures and vocabulary learned in class. Focus is on the proper use of nouns, adjectives, and verbs to create sentences and paragraphs in Spanish. An overview of Aztec, Mayan, and Incan cultures is also introduced during this year. Projects include country reports, creating family albums, writing book

reports, and reading a Spanish novel. This course incorporates field trips to relevant museum and art exhibits, as well as opportunities to experience different cultural cuisine.

### **8<sup>th</sup> Grade**

This course continues to focus on achieving communicative goals through speaking, reading and writing in Spanish. Commands, past tense, direct and indirect objects, pronouns, and irregular verbs are used to give directions, express preferences, make purchases, and order food. Projects include creating menus, reading a novel in Spanish, and researching and creating a PowerPoint presentation on a Mexican state as an interdisciplinary project with their computer class. Field trips to museums and art exhibits enhance the classroom instruction. They will also experience different tastes of cultures during various culinary adventures.

## **ARTS AND COMMUNICATIONS**

### **Instrumental Music**

#### **6<sup>th</sup> Grade**

Students are introduced to band instruments. They select an instrument that they would like to learn to play. They are taught how to assemble, hold, and produce sound on their chosen instrument. Production of good tone quality is taught. Ensemble playing and tuning are introduced. The discipline of routine practice is strongly stressed.

#### **7<sup>th</sup> Grade**

In playing their instruments, students continue to develop good tone quality and exhibit musical skills for ensemble playing. They learn to master the dynamic levels and execute articulations and other musical expressions. Routine practice is expected. Students who exhibit higher levels of achievement are asked to join the Honor Band. Those who accept the opportunity commit to extra practice and playing engagements.

#### **8<sup>th</sup> Grade**

As students continue playing in the concert band, students hone good tone quality and exhibit musical skills for ensemble playing. They learn to master the dynamic levels and execute articulations and other musical expressions. Routine practice is expected. Students who exhibit higher levels of achievement are asked to join the Band. Those who accept the opportunity commit to extra practice and playing engagements.

### **Drama**

6<sup>th</sup> grade drama is a collaborative effort through which all the students participate in the creative process of producing a dramatic performance. From building sets to lighting to costuming, and performing, students learn to understand the theatre arts.

### **Improvisation**

The improv class includes all the aspects of extemporaneous acting while challenging the students to think quickly and creatively. Students learn to trust and accept their fellow actors by participating in various trust games and activities. Students connect physical movements with specific character traits as they explore the physical part of acting. Storytelling is an integral part of the course, as acting is just that.

### **Visual Art**

#### **6<sup>th</sup> Grade**

Students focus on utilizing the elements and principles of art in their own work. Art historical concepts related to each specific project is taught via slide presentations, books, field trips and current publications. Shape and form are developed through two-dimensional works on paper using charcoal and pencil. Principles of art, including composition and balance are developed via work in collage and painting. Additional principles, including space, rhythm and movement, are guided through sculptural creations originating from found objects. Presentation, craftsmanship, and creativity are reviewed.

## **7<sup>th</sup> Grade**

This class is where students begin to investigate ways in which art history relates to contemporary work. Investigation of African Art and Medieval Art are utilized in students' creations. The elements and principles of art continue to be emphasized in all projects. Design and self-expression are further emphasized via the projects Painted African Gourds and Self Portraits, respectively. Students continue to learn about handling different materials; for example, clay. New techniques and concepts in two-dimensional dry media are also taught. These include cross-hatching, thumbnail sketches, vanishing point and perspective. Presentation, craftsmanship, and success are emphasized in project goals.

## **8<sup>th</sup> Grade**

The primary purpose of this class is to expand students' concepts of art and introduce new media. Vocabulary of art and guidelines are taught and used in discussing work. Students further develop skills introduced in the previous grades. Students will focus on printmaking, and additional work will be in clay, drawing, and design. Students are expected to work more independently as the quarter progresses and as they develop skills and individual expression. Demonstrations and individual guidance continue as methods of teaching.

## **Information Technology**

### **6<sup>th</sup> Grade**

As class projects are assigned, students visit the Resource Library to locate print and electronic resources. All the skills previously taught continue to be reinforced, especially the five-step research process. Different indexes to the Internet are taught in order to gather information efficiently. Students are introduced to determining the relevancy of the information provided. These skills are refined in 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades. This course includes the Modern Language Association (MLA) standard for proper report formatting, including the bibliography. Keyboarding practice strives to achieve typing speeds of 25 wpm with at least 90% accuracy, and Microsoft Word skills are further enhanced.

### **7<sup>th</sup> Grade**

Seventh Grade expands upon report formats to include MLA style. Title pages, pagination, and use of bulleted and numbered lists are taught. Extensive uses of Microsoft Office tools for reports and spreadsheets are incorporated into the curriculum to enhance in-class projects. More facets of the PowerPoint program are mastered and incorporated into reports and presentations. Students also learn Excel, and Publisher is used in conjunction with the interdisciplinary unit with Science and English.

### **8<sup>th</sup> Grade**

Website development and programming skills are taught and used as part of the curriculum. PowerPoint development along with presentation skills will be a focus of attention. Time permitting, students are introduced to Multimedia and Photoshop. Keyboarding practice continues and students strive to achieve typing speeds of 35 wpm with 90% accuracy. There is also the expectation that the required level of proficiency for high school graduation will have been met.

Elective:

### **INTRODUCTION TO SCRATCH PROGRAMMING I**

In this 16 weeks course, middle school students are entering the world of computer science by learning how to create animations, computer games, and interactive projects. The programming platform is Scratch, a graphical programming language developed at MIT. Students will be learning the fundamental programming concepts such as variables, loops, conditional statements, and event handling. As the students are working on the progressive projects, they learn how to use math and computer code to think creatively, and solve problems. The course will show students how to make and import objects, create audio recordings, and use them to develop interactive projects. At the end of the course, students create their own computer animation and share it with instructor and classmates. Students who successfully complete the course will be prepared to study more advanced concepts in the next level course, Scratch Programming II.

### **The Art of Public Speaking**

This course, for 8<sup>th</sup> grade students, is designed to give students the opportunity to learn about the basic skills of communication. These include voice, movement, articulation, and projection, as well as understanding the



communication process, the elements of communication, and the work of speaking and listening to become competent communicators. Students learn about the different types of public communication (informative and persuasive), while learning how to find and use information, construct the speech, and deliver the speech. Impromptu speeches are scattered throughout the course where students apply the principles of effective public speaking.

## LIFE SKILLS

Character education is enmeshed both formally and informally into the Junior High School program. Positive character traits are highlighted through our Expected Schoolwide Learning Results and curriculum, but developed more fully and focused on more in depth through literature, topics in history, and other subject matter. Specific school concerns, social issues, study skills, test-taking strategies, goal-setting, and organizational skills are addressed in our Life Skills classes, which are taught weekly in grade level groups. In each grade, certain over-arching themes are emphasized, as follows:

### **6<sup>th</sup> grade – Individual Growth Development**

**Nutrition** – students learn about the importance of eating healthy foods. They study about refined sugars, complex carbohydrates, saturated and unsaturated fats, proteins, portion size, reading and understanding food labels, caloric intake, food groups, and exercise.

**Acceptance and Respect** – students learn about cultivating friendliness, compassion, happiness, and the need to support those who are less fortunate.

**Personality Types and Learning Styles** – students learn about the different personality types and learning styles. They analyze their own types and styles by observing their strengths and weaknesses and working on different approaches to gain success.

### **7<sup>th</sup> Grade – Peer and Social Interaction**

**Problem Solving** – students learn to identify a problem, seek possible solutions, determine consequences for each possible solution, select a course of action, take action, and evaluate the outcome.

**Conflict Resolution** – students learn how to stay cool in conflicts, how to listen, stand up for oneself, show respect, and solve the conflict. Along with this is learning to make proper eye contact, and use appropriate body language and tone of voice.

**Acceptance and Respect** – students learn about the effects of teasing and pejorative language. They investigate the proper use of social media and its harmful use.

### **8<sup>th</sup> Grade – The Real World**

**Body Image** – students investigate and analyze media and advertising regarding body image. They also look at stereotypes, self-esteem, and harassment. An eating disorder curriculum is also included.

**Substance Abuse** – students learn the truth about nicotine, alcohol, and drugs through a program developed by The Foundation for a Drug-Free World.

**High School** – students identify their perceptions and fears of high school, and look at their expectations. Along with this unit, students look at recognizing signs of their stress and anxiety, techniques for coping, and ways for overcoming their fears.