St. Anne's-Belfield School

2026 - 27

Lower School Curriculum Guide







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All-School Information

2026-27 Senior Administration Leadership Team

Autumn A. Graves, Ed.D., Head of School
A. Randol "Randie" Benedict, M.S.Ed., Associate Head of School for Enrollment Management
Julie Brooks, M.Ed., Head of the Lower School
Lisa Nguyen Ha, M.P.A., Chief Strategic Communications Officer (CCO)
Seth Kushkin, Director of Athletics (AD)
Beth Miller, M.Ed., Head of the Upper School
David Miller, Ed.D., Assistant Head of School
Marie Reed, M.A., Head of the Middle School
Leah Shiraishi, M.A., Director of the Head of School's Office

Misson

"We wish our students to become strong in body, broad of mind, tender of heart, responsive in soul."

— Mary Hyde DuVal, Founding Headmistress

Core Purpose

To inspire and prepare the next generation of exemplary citizens and visionary leaders.

Core Values

Integrity: Cultivating responsible, honorable, ethical behavior

Curiosity: Fulfilling our desire to question, to know and to learn for a lifetime

Diversity: Seeking to know, learn from and value one another

Creativity: Expecting imaginative, critical and divergent thinking

Agency: Empowering students to own their learning

Impact: Accomplishing meaningful, significant work for the greater good

History

St. Anne's-Belfield School is a best-in-class, co-educational independent school in Charlottesville, Va. serving students age 2 through Grade 12. The School's present structure is the result of the merger of St. Anne's School, a girls' boarding school founded in 1910 by the Reverend Dr. Henry Bedinger Lee, rector of Christ Church (Episcopal) of Charlottesville, and Belfield School, a co-educational elementary school established in 1955. Situated on two campuses totaling more than 50 acres, St. Anne's-Belfield School graduated its first class in 1974. While an interfaith Chapel remains one of the School's most treasured traditions, the School is no longer affiliated with the Episcopal church or any particular religion.

Philosophy

We at St. Anne's-Belfield School believe that our students will become exemplary citizens and visionary leaders because of the inspiration of exceptional teachers and the nourishment of every child's innate curiosity. Our mission is to feed this curiosity through exceptional, innovative teaching and learning in an intentional age 2 through Grade 12 community in which close relationships provide the foundation for achievement and where every child is known well. Curiosity — that desire to grow, know, ask, create, and solve — is both the fuel of learning and an essential ingredient to success in an ever-changing world; it must be encouraged from the earliest years and throughout life. Our goal is to nourish our students' curiosity about themselves, their world, and the diverse people around them, in an educational experience that inspires, challenges, and stimulates innovative, empathetic, and creative thought. We pose compelling questions and seek answers through inquiry, application of core skills, development of essential habits, thoughtful reflection, collaboration with others, and the appropriate use of technology. The questions we ask and the answers we seek reflect our commitment to the cultivation of responsible, honorable behavior and to a mindfulness of the needs of others.

We strive to equip our students with the knowledge, skills, habits, and attitudes that will allow them to pursue their dreams in a rapidly changing and increasingly technological world, and to be exemplary citizens in life and work. Ours is a challenging yet charitable community distinguished by superior instruction that is cutting edge and student driven; by exceptionally knowledgeable and highly-trained teachers; and by an environment that exalts growth over grades by providing a culture of intellectual candor and rich feedback. Our community strives for excellence in all aspects of School life and encourages students to discover and develop empathy, diversity of perspective, adaptability, flexibility, resilience, agency, self-efficacy, and inventiveness. We embrace uncompromisingly high expectations for ethical, selfless behavior and hold firmly to our commitment to inclusion, civility, and kindness.

Portrait of a 2036 Graduate

The Portrait of a 2036 Graduate is an articulation of the habits, mindsets, and skill sets that St. Anne's-Belfield School believes are essential for our graduates in the present and the future. With the first phase completed in 2023-24, it is an aspirational document and applicable in an age-appropriate manner for our entire student population, from age 2 to Grade 12. The date, 2036, symbolically represents the year that the then-Kindergarten students will walk the stage at Commencement. The Portrait ties together the St. Anne's-Belfield School mission, vision, and core values. We believe that all of our students should become exemplary citizens, as stated in our school vision statement. We define exemplary citizens as those who are strong in body, broad of mind, tender of heart, and responsive in soul, as articulated in our mission. The Portrait of a 2036 Graduate further explores how we define these ideas and our expectations for our students as they grow into exemplary citizens. Each of the School's six core values (integrity, curiosity, diversity, creativity, agency, and impact) is found in these definitions. You may read the full Portrait a stannesbelfield.org/discover/portrait-of-a-graduate/

Chapel

Chapel is the oldest continuous tradition of St. Anne's-Belfield School, reflecting the history of the School's founding by the Episcopal Church in 1910. The School is independent of any specific faith, and while our Chapel program is rooted in the Episcopal tradition, our community is inclusive of all faiths, backgrounds, and beliefs.

All St. Anne's-Belfield School community members share the common experience of attending Chapel services. Students and faculty gather around a personal reflection from a community member that opens a window into the diverse perspectives and experiences of others, inspires introspection, sparks thoughtful dialogue, or offers a moral lesson. Student-centered voice, in developmentally-appropriate ways, lies at the heart of the Chapel experience.

Across the divisions, three guideposts shape the Chapel experience: the spiritually rooted tradition of our service, the heartfelt community focus of our reflections, readings, and music, and a warm openness to spiritual diversity and belonging in our outlook. In the midst of the busyness of school life, Chapel gives us a place to nurture the fullness of Mary Hyde DuVal's mission: "We wish our students to be strong in body, broad of mind, tender of heart, and responsive in soul."

Statement on Inclusive Excellence

St. Anne's-Belfield School believes that exemplary citizenship and visionary leadership are best nurtured in a welcoming School community based on equity, inclusivity, and the pursuit of excellence. Our School strives to provide a well-balanced educational experience that affirms the richness and diversity of humanity, creates an expectation of belonging based on shared human dignity, and encourages a desire to learn about and from each other.

Non-Discrimination Policy

The School admits qualified students of any race, color, national origin, place of birth, ancestry, sex, religion, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, mental or physical disability, or any status protected by applicable law, and extends to them all the privilege to participate in the educational programs generally accorded or made available to students at the School. The School does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin, ancestry, sex, religion, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, mental or physical disability, or any status protected by applicable law in the administration of its admission or its educational programs.

Accreditation

St. Anne's-Belfield is accredited by Southern Association of Independent Schools (SAIS). SAIS is a professional organization that seeks to strengthen member schools by providing high-quality accreditation processes, comprehensive professional growth opportunities, and visionary leadership development programs. With more than 380 member K-12 schools from 14 U.S. states, the Caribbean, and Latin America (representing 220,000+ students), SAIS is the largest regional independent school association in the country.

Governance

The School is governed by a self-perpetuating board of trustees. It is the responsibility of this body to plan, develop, and establish policy and to assess the performance of the School consistent with the School's mission and philosophy. The Board of Trustees is responsible for the selection of and close collaboration with the head of school. In turn, the head of school is responsible for the implementation of policy and the day-to-day operations of the School.

Lower School (Kindergarten – Grade 4)

The Social Curriculum

The social curriculum in Kindergarten – Grade 4 fosters our students' social and emotional growth. We focus on community building that strengthens the qualities of each individual and supports the development of group cohesion. Our curriculum is shaped by faculty training in Responsive Classroom techniques. Each school day begins with a Morning Meeting in each homeroom. Personalized greetings and thoughtfully designed activities are employed to foster qualities such as curiosity, confidence, cooperation, responsibility, and empathy. We recognize the integral relationship between academic achievement and social-emotional resilience. As students feel acknowledged, supported, and valued, they are better poised to excel in all parts of their school experience.

At the beginning of every school year, students, parents/guardians, and teachers share their personal hopes and dreams. These are revisited and reflected on throughout the school year. Students participate in role-plays, group discussions, and Chapel presentations that connect to our Lower School yearly theme and focus on our interconnectedness and individual roles and responsibilities in a larger community. They learn to resolve problems using a variety of tools, self-esteem-building practices, and group brainstorming. Through these practices, students learn to recognize that both natural and logical consequences follow from their behavior and that each of us is responsible for our actions. Throughout the day, classes pause to regroup and practice mindfulness techniques like "the peaceful pause" in order to settle their minds and bodies, strengthen their self-control and focus their attention.

Our Parent/Guardian Partnership Meetings enable faculty and parents and guardians to form a connection between home and school life. We strive to keep communication open, honest, and supportive of the student. The best interests of the child are at the center of all decision making.

Reading & Language Arts

The Kindergarten – Grade 4 Reading & Language Arts (RLA) program includes the following components:

- Phonemic Awareness
- Phonics (Decoding) and Spelling (Encoding)
- Fluency
- Vocabulary
- Comprehension

In the RLA program, students develop skills in decoding, encoding, word recognition, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension through explicit instruction as they learn to read for various purposes. Differentiated instruction in a variety of texts and genres allows students to develop effective word recognition and comprehension skills and strategies in order to read proficiently. Daily reading, both at school and at home, supports this goal. As teachers provide opportunities for choice, reflection, perspective development, and connection making through texts, students build foundational knowledge and skills that promote lifelong reading.

Kindergarten

The foundation of Kindergarten Reading & Language Arts instruction is rooted in phonological awareness, which culminates in phonemic awareness: the ability to hear, identify, and manipulate individual sounds in spoken words. In Kindergarten, students connect their knowledge of phonemes to graphemes (written representations of sounds), in order to blend individual sounds into words, both orally and in printed text.

During interactive read aloud instruction, Kindergarten readers have the opportunity to build and share a collection of meaningful stories. Shared stories provide students exposure to and experience with print concepts and comprehension skills through knowledge building with complex texts. Kindergartners also develop their early reading skills through differentiated small-group reading instruction, as well as structured and sequential multisensory phonics lessons. High-frequency words are introduced and discussed as students learn vowel and consonant sounds.

Grade 1

Grade 1 readers receive explicit instruction as they continue building word recognition and language comprehension skills. Using and applying efficient word-solving strategies is a foundation of Grade 1. Students are taught phonics features sequentially in one and two syllable words that include short- and long-vowel patterns to help them decode and encode with greater automaticity. High frequency words continue to be taught in order for students to read and write them accurately. Identifying and understanding both regular and irregular letter-sound correspondences within these words allows students to read with increasing fluency. Small group work in connected texts also provides fluency practice, as children begin to read with greater accuracy at a smoother pace, while also building vocabulary and background knowledge.

Grade 2

Grade 2 readers build upon their word recognition skills when decoding and spelling multisyllabic words, as well as high frequency words that contain some irregular patterns. Reading comprehension is further developed as students learn and practice self-monitoring and self-correcting strategies. Readers make predictions, write summaries, utilize text features, and ask and answer questions about the text in both fiction and nonfiction genres. Other focuses of comprehension instruction include identifying the author's purpose and understanding story elements, such as setting, plot, and character development. Students learn to use punctuation cues including commas, periods, question marks, and quotation marks to guide them in reading aloud fluently, with appropriate phrasing and expression. Small group differentiated instruction continues to both support and stretch our readers in areas of decoding, vocabulary, fluency and comprehension.

Grade 3

Grade 3 readers continue to develop their decoding, encoding, fluency, and comprehension skills by reading widely and in-depth from fiction and nonfiction texts of increasing complexity. Grade 3 students learn to identify the main idea and supporting details in nonfiction texts and preview nonfiction text structures. While reading fiction, students identify and discuss the theme, plot, setting, character traits, and author's purpose in greater depth. Grade 3 students also read and respond to biographies, graphic novels, and poetry. They demonstrate their understanding through discussion and writing, including graphic organizers that correlate with particular genres and texts. Grade 3 students learn morphology, which includes instruction of prefixes, suffixes, and commonly used Latin and Greek bases. As students learn these morphemes, they read connected text and build word sums, discussing how multisyllabic words are broken apart based on morphological units and syllable types.

Grade 4

Students in Grade 4 continue to develop and extend their reading skills as they read, compare, and contrast longer, more rigorous texts. Grade 4 students practice comprehending at the inferential and critical levels. They work to develop a deep understanding of text by analyzing characters, identifying and questioning authors' perspectives, and interpreting the significance of stories. Students demonstrate their understanding through writing, recording, drawing, discussion, and cumulative projects. Grade 4 students read widely and in depth from fiction and nonfiction genres including informational texts, biography, realistic fiction, fantasy, historical fiction, graphic novels, and poetry. They continue to build their vocabulary and spelling knowledge by studying new prefixes, suffixes, and Greek and Latin bases in multisyllabic words during morphology instruction.

Writing Workshop

Writing Workshop in Kindergarten – Grade 4 is designed to provide students with a developmentally appropriate experience in which they write regularly, learning about both process and product. Students are instructed and learn to write in a variety of genres. They strengthen their understanding of craft and conventions through the study of mentor texts. The writing program aims to establish a clear connection between reading and writing as our students become readers who write and writers who read.

Kindergarten

In Kindergarten, students begin the year by telling, drawing, and sharing both fictional and true stories. As the school year continues, students learn to draw, label, and write narrative and fictional stories, pattern books, informational texts, and friendly letters. Students are taught and explore writers' and illustrators' craft through mentor texts that are read aloud. As students build their foundational writing skills, they practice printing upper and lower case letters with proper letter formation and appropriate spacing as they learn how to craft a complete sentence.

Grade 1

In Grade 1, students write personal narratives, nonfiction "All About" books, persuasive pieces, friendly letters, and poetry. Writing instruction focuses on adding detail, sounding out words using phonetic and taught spelling patterns, and using conventions with increased proficiency. Personal narratives, nonfiction, and persuasive writing allow for student choice in order to share more about their experiences and interests. Students receive grammar instruction in conventions such as capitalization and punctuation, vocabulary and precise word choice, transition words, and avoiding run-on sentences. They use the mnemonic device, "CUPS" (Capitalisation, Understanding, Punctuation and Spelling), to ensure correct capitalization, understanding, punctuation and spelling in each writing piece. Writing topics are frequently connected to the social studies curriculum in order for students to learn more about themselves, their classmates, their communities, and others around the world. Students learn to write friendly letters and share them with members of the School community to show gratitude, find out information, and build connections with others. Students also read and write poetry, learning to generate and identify rhyming words while using descriptive language.

Grade 2

In Grade 2, students write personal narratives and small moment stories, focusing on adding details to create a piece with a clear and developed beginning, middle, and end. Second graders write multiple informational "How-To" texts, and they learn to include sequential steps with detailed, labeled illustrations that match text. Students share these How To texts with partners, testing out the steps to see if they can reach the desired outcome. Grade 2 students also write several persuasive pieces, including letters that outline opinions related to their book recommendations. Finally, they compose free verse poetry using line breaks to convey meaning. As students craft pieces and engage in dictation work, they continue to use the mnemonic device, "CUPS" (Capitalisation, Understanding, Punctuation and Spelling) to edit and revise for correct capitalization, understanding, punctuation and spelling.

Grade 3

In Grade 3, students write personal narratives focusing on personally significant people, places, and objects. Later in the year, students research animals native to Virginia and write informational reports about their chosen animal. Organizing information into paragraphs, using appropriate conventions, composing sentences that grab and hold a reader's attention, and including interesting and relevant details are areas of focus for informational writing. Students also write persuasive speeches and adapted fairy tales. They are taught to organize fictional writing into paragraphs and how to use dialogue and action to further a plot. Through lessons on personification, alliteration, metaphors/similes, and word choice, students compose free verse poetry. Connected to reading work, Grade 3 students continue to develop their vocabulary and spelling skills as they study morphology, as well as synonyms, antonyms, homographs and homophones.

Grade 4

In Grade 4, students explore a variety of writing genres, craft moves, and strategies through the examination of mentor texts, generating pieces using learned skills and strategies. They begin the year studying the skills and techniques needed to write compelling realistic fiction stories. Each child drafts, revises, and publishes a piece with original characters, descriptive detail, dialogue, and a well developed plot. In the second trimester, students write personal essays, learning to organize their writing around a central idea and develop it using supporting details written in paragraph form. Students then transfer their essay-writing skills to crafting an essay on an influential person. Students apply research and note-taking strategies to include key details about their subject and its impact on the world. In the third trimester, students expand their understanding of writing craft through the creation of original free verse and form poems. A culminating writing experience for Grade 4 students is the creation of a fiction pourquoi story that is written and illustrated for Kindergarten Chapel Buddies. Throughout the school year, students focus on grade-level writing mechanics and grammar concepts, and incorporate technology for collaborative writing, publishing, and sharing written work.

Mathematics

Lower School students learn mathematics through Kendall Hunt's "Illustrative Mathematics: IM 360" curriculum. Illustrative Mathematics is a problem-based program that encourages students to draw on their existing understanding, lived experiences, and the world around them as resources for problem solving. Lessons are designed to engage students in actively "doing mathematics." They develop concepts and procedures while participating in key mathematical practices, including making sense of problems, reasoning abstractly and quantitatively, constructing arguments and critiquing the reasoning of others, modeling with mathematics, using appropriate tools strategically, attending to precision, recognizing structure, and expressing regularity in repeated reasoning. As students strengthen these skills, they become increasingly able to apply their understanding flexibly in new and unfamiliar situations.

Kindergarten

In Kindergarten, more time is devoted to numbers than to other topics. The focus includes representing and comparing whole numbers, initially with sets of objects; understanding and applying addition and subtraction; and describing shapes and space. The materials, particularly units that focus on addition and subtraction, include problem types, such as add to, take from, put together or take apart, compare, and result unknown.

Grade 1

In Grade 1, the focus includes developing understanding of addition and subtraction and strategies for addition and subtraction within 20; developing understanding of whole-number relationships and place value, including grouping tens and ones; developing understanding of linear measurement and measuring lengths as iterating length units; and reasoning about attributes of, and composing and decomposing, geometric shapes. The materials, particularly units that focus on addition and subtraction, include problem types, such as add to, take from, put together or take apart, compare, and result unknown.

Grade 2

In Grade 2, the focus includes extending understanding of the base-10 number system; building fluency with addition and subtraction; using standard units of measure; and describing and analyzing shapes. The materials, particularly units that focus on addition and subtraction, include problem types such as add to, take from, put together, take apart, compare, and result unknown.

Grade 3

In Grade 3, the focus includes developing understanding of multiplication and division and strategies for multiplication and division within 100; developing understanding of fractions, especially unit fractions (fractions with numerator 1); developing understanding of the structure of rectangular arrays and of area; and describing and analyzing two-dimensional shapes.

Grade 4

In Grade 4, the focus includes developing understanding and fluency with multi-digit multiplication and developing understanding of dividing to find quotients involving multi-digit dividends; developing an understanding of fraction equivalence, addition and subtraction of fractions with like denominators, and multiplication of fractions by whole numbers; and understanding that geometric figures can be analyzed and classified based on their properties, such as having parallel sides, perpendicular sides, particular angle measures, and symmetry.

Science

The goal of our science program is to help students develop the skills of scientific inquiry and apply those skills to specific units of study.

Kindergarten

Kindergartners study how they can take care of our global environment. Students collaborate and investigate ways to help the environment. Students explore nature and their outdoor surroundings and learn to make detailed observations, ask questions, and investigate the natural world. They also inquire about their own physical, academic, and emotional growth over the course of the year.

Grade 1

Grade 1 students plan and conduct simple investigations in visits to the science lab. Many of the science classes are conducted outdoors in nature during the fall and spring months.

Grade 1 students learn autonomy outdoors as they discover how to assess the safety of an outdoor area. Students learn how to slow down and notice details around them by using their sense of hearing, vision, and quiet walking feet. Additionally, students explore a variety of scientific measurement tools such as a ruler, measuring tape, balance, and a graduated cylinder. Students learn how to select the best measurement tool based on what is being observed.

Grade 1 students explore physics in a unit called Balls and Ramps. They experiment to see how variables such as weight, material, ball size, and the height of the ramp can affect motion. Students learn the importance of a "fair test" in which variables are changed one at a time.

Finally, Grade 1 students explore weather patterns and the water cycle. Students learn about weather terms and phenomena, such as evaporation, precipitation, and condensation. They also learn how to read a thermometer. Students set up group experiments, create graphs, and tally data as they explore and observe Virginia weather.

Grade 2

Grade 2 students study geology. Students learn about the layers of the Earth and investigate how the layers impact Earth's topography. Students explore slow changes such as the formation of mountains or caves and fast changes such as earthquakes or volcanoes. They also investigate how layers of the Earth contribute to the rock cycle creating igneous, metamorphic, and sedimentary rock. Students learn to observe, measure, and classify rocks according to their characteristics. A highlight of the unit is a field trip to the Grand Caverns.

Grade 2 students also investigate matter in its different forms: solids, liquids, and gases. They test, observe, and describe the properties of specific solids, liquids, and gases, and explore changes caused by simple chemical and physical reactions.

Finally, Grade 2 students study the animal kingdom. Students learn how to classify animals based on their similarities and differences. Grade 2 students investigate vertebrates by creating a book called "Feeling Our Way Through Vertebrate Classification," exploring the textures and other characteristics of mammals, amphibians, birds, reptiles, and fish. Grade 2 students also study invertebrates, specifically focusing on the arthropod classification into insects, arachnids, crustaceans, and myriapods.

Grade 3

Grade 3 students spend many classes outdoors in our nearby deciduous forest to investigate ecosystems. Students describe the roles of biotic and abiotic things in the ecosystem with specific focus on how everything is interdependent. Students learn about local producers, consumers, and decomposers in the forest, recognizing that each organism is important to the ecosystem's survival.

Grade 3 students explore electricity and discover the content through hands-on experiments. They investigate electric conductors and insulators and build series and parallel circuits. A favorite project in the unit uses the students' new knowledge of electric circuits to build electric quiz boards. Students also use their knowledge of series and parallel circuits to complete five holiday lights challenges, using holiday lights, a battery, and wires to achieve specific goals.

Grade 3 students also learn about plants and soil through observations, measurements, and the comparison of different plant parts and types of soil. They collect and record data about seeds and plants, using charts and scientific drawings to communicate their observations. Students make predictions and devise experiments to find the ideal conditions for plant growth and they investigate photosynthesis and pollination.

Grade 4

Grade 4 students begin the year by participating in a program created by the Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center entitled "Bridging the Americas/Unidos por las aves." The Smithsonian pairs each Grade 4 class with a buddy class located in a Spanish speaking area of the tropics. The Spanish and science classes work in collaboration to teach students about the culture and ecosystems of their buddy class's country. Additionally, students investigate migratory birds that travel from Virginia to the tropics where their buddy class is located.

Grade 4 students also explore astronomy. Students learn basic facts about our solar system, including the size of Earth compared to the vast universe, planets in our solar system, the moon phases, and why the Earth has seasons. Students also learn basic vocabulary such as asteroid, comet, meteor, rotation, and revolution. Lastly, students participate in a "Mystery Planet Base Design" capstone project, where they design and build a base model for a mystery planet in our solar system. Students work in groups to conduct "experiments" to send to a mystery planet, use the class's results to identify which planet they have been assigned, and then design/build a habitable base model for the assigned planet.

Finally, Grade 4 students focus on the physical science of sound. Students participate in a variety of experiments discovering how vibrating matter creates sounds, how sound can be manipulated, and how sound is depicted in waves. Students demonstrate their understanding of sound by creating a musical instrument that changes pitch and amplitude.

Spanish

Kindergarten

Throughout the Kindergarten Spanish program, students develop foundational language skills through songs, stories, movement, games, and daily routines conducted entirely in Spanish. Students learn and practice vocabulary related to greetings, the calendar, seasons, weather, colors, body parts, animals, family members, and the natural world. Through repetition and meaningful activities, they grow their ability to understand and use Spanish to communicate. Students explore cross-curricular concepts such as patterns, light and shadows, and life cycles while building Spanish vocabulary. By the end of the year, students can participate with confidence in Spanish-language routines and use the target language to count, express emotion, and answer basic questions.

Grade 1

In the Grade 1 Spanish program, students develop language skills through songs, movement, games, and routines conducted entirely in Spanish. In addition to weekly Spanish classes, students participate in a weekly morning meeting where they greet one another, discuss personal preferences, read messages, and review the calendar in Spanish. Students learn and apply vocabulary related to months, seasons, food, kitchen items, clothing, body parts, colors, and numbers. Through hands-on projects, they create month booklets, design and describe outfits, and invent monsters using Spanish vocabulary. Music plays an integral role in language acquisition as students learn and perform songs. Throughout the year, students gain confidence communicating in Spanish and demonstrate increasing enthusiasm and independence when using the language.

Grade 2

Over the course of the year, students in Grade 2 Spanish expand their language skills through routines, songs, games, and conversations conducted entirely in Spanish. Students focus on Spanish phonetics, learning vowel and consonant sounds. To support pronunciation and literacy development, students learn to associate each letter sound with Spanish

vocabulary words and corresponding American Sign Language (ASL) signs. As their phonetic knowledge grows, students practice reading, spelling, and writing in Spanish through dictation and interactive activities. Additionally, students make cross-curricular connections when learning about Ancient Egyptian civilization in Social Studies. At that time, they compare and contrast the Aztecs and the ancient Egyptians and explore the use of hieroglyphics as a means of communication. Throughout the year, students gain confidence receiving instruction in Spanish and apply their language skills through listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

Grade 3

In the Grade 3 Spanish program, students expand their vocabulary and comprehension through the exploration of geography, culture, and the natural world. Students investigate cognates, strengthening their ability to recognize connections between English and Spanish while developing reading and listening skills. Drawing on topics from Social Studies, they learn geographical terms, practice map skills, and learn to identify the 21 Spanish-speaking countries. Students also discuss ecosystems and animal characteristics, applying newly-acquired language to describe animals and create original hybrid creatures. Research and presentation skills are developed through projects like the Spanish-speaking country poster, which highlights geography, wildlife, population, currency, and national symbols. By the end of the year, students demonstrate greater confidence using Spanish to interpret information, communicate ideas, and make connections across subject areas.

Grade 4

In Grade 4 Spanish, students strengthen their ability to understand and use Spanish through increasingly complex interpersonal and interpretive tasks. Students expand their vocabulary and communication skills by using cognates strategically and incorporating question words to support more sustained exchanges in Spanish. Interdisciplinary learning plays a central role as students connect Spanish to Science and Art through the Smithsonian's "Bridging the Americas" program. As part of this program, students learn about migratory birds and correspond with a class in Latin America. Throughout the year, they apply language creatively through original compositions, including murals, dialogues, and performances that integrate a wide range of thematic vocabulary. By the end of the year, students demonstrate greater fluency, confidence, and flexibility using Spanish in both structured and creative contexts.

Computer Science

Computer Science (CS) goes beyond teaching students how to use computers. It helps them understand why computers work and how to create the programs and systems behind them. This deeper learning gives students the tools to use technology confidently and thoughtfully, with an understanding of their rights, responsibilities, and how technology applies to the world around them. Students develop valuable skills like problem-solving, logical thinking, and creative design that support learning in all areas of school and life.

Kindergarten

In Kindergarten, students are introduced to the basics of computer science through engaging, hands-on experiences. Using block-based programming, simple robotics, and unplugged (off-screen) activities, they begin exploring foundational concepts such as patterns, sequences, loops, conditions (like if/then), and debugging. Along the way, they also start to learn and use key computer science vocabulary in an age-appropriate context. The goal at this level is to nurture curiosity and confidence as students take on creative challenges that help them explore new skills, practice what they're learning, and make meaningful connections across different subjects and technology tools.

Grade 1

In Grade 1, students continue and deepen their computer science learning. They revisit foundational concepts such as sequences, loops, conditions (if/then), pattern recognition, and debugging, but with greater complexity and confidence. Students are also introduced to event-driven programming as they begin to understand how actions can trigger specific outcomes in a program. Using these skills, students begin creating their first CS products, such as simple animated maps and interactive stories. They build on what they already know while exploring new ways to apply CS thinking across different subjects and technologies.

Grade 2

In Grade 2, students transition from icon-based to word-block coding. Building on prior knowledge of sequences, loops, conditions (if/then), pattern recognition, and debugging, they begin learning how to use written code structures to solve problems and design simple programs. Through a variety of challenge-based activities, students strengthen their coding and design skills while also exploring advanced tools such as 3D printers, laser cutters, and other digital fabrication technologies. These experiences support students in creating purposeful, technology-based projects that connect computer science to real-world applications.

Grade 3

In Grade 3, students continue to deepen their understanding of computer science while also building new skills in technology and design. At this level, they begin creating cross-curricular projects that integrate computer science into academic subjects. For example, while learning about electricity in science, students build their own electronic circuits. Students also have dedicated time in the Fab Lab, where they use digital tools and fabrication technologies to create purposeful, tech-based projects that showcase their growing abilities and creativity.

Grade 4

In Grade 4, students take a more advanced step by designing, building, coding, and testing their own technology creations across a range of disciplines. These projects allow them to apply their CS skills in meaningful ways, demonstrating understanding in academic

subjects through creative, tech-integrated work. Students strengthen their independence in using a wider range of tools and materials to support their goals — including laser cutters, 3D printers, and microcontrollers like Arduinos. Whether working independently in Fab Lab or collaboratively on classroom projects such as space exploration, students learn to evaluate which technologies best fit their ideas and bring their designs to life.

Visual Arts

The study of art history and historic artists is introduced in lessons throughout Kindergarten – Grade 4 as an important part of the art education process. Other areas considered are, of course, primarily art production and creation, and to a lesser extent, art criticism and aesthetics. The Elements and Principles of Design and the Eight Studio Habits of Mind are emphasized in the visual arts classroom. Kindergarten – Grade 4 students are taught by an art specialist who introduces the language of art and helps students develop skills in seeing, exploring, interpreting, and expressing their world through a variety of two- and three-dimensional media.

Note: Resources and cultures studied change each year according to student needs, student interest, and integration with other disciplines.

Kindergarten

Kindergarten students explore the visual arts through experimentation with materials, drawing, painting, sculpting, and imagining. Students are learning basic artmaking with a variety of media with an emphasis on engaging the senses while being exposed to different cultures, artists, and genres of art. Through artmaking students practice basic fine motor skills of cutting, gluing, painting with hands and brushes, and sculpting. Identifying building blocks of design, caring for materials, cooperating, and sharing ideas while growing their imagination are emphasized in this class. Students also learn to share their artistic discoveries and respect and appreciate the efforts of others.

Grade 1

Grade 1 students continue to explore the visual arts through developmentally appropriate experimentation with materials, drawing, painting, sculpting, and imagining. Students are learning basic artmaking with a variety of media while being exposed to different cultures, artists, and genres of art which are integrated into studies in other disciplines. Through artmaking students practice more challenging fine motor skills of cutting, gluing, painting with brushes, and sculpting. Identifying and using the vocabulary of the building blocks of design, caring for materials, cooperating, and sharing ideas while growing their imagination are emphasized in this class. Students continue to share their artistic discoveries and learn how to respect and appreciate the efforts of others.

Grade 2

Grade 2 students continue to explore the visual arts through developmentally appropriate experimentation with materials, drawing, painting, sculpting, and imagining. While using a variety of media, students are exposed to different cultures, artists, and genres of art, which are integrated into studies in other disciplines. Through artmaking, students practice more precise fine motor skills of cutting, gluing, painting with multiple types of brushes, and sculpting. Identifying and using the vocabulary of the elements and the principles of design, caring for materials, cooperating, and sharing ideas while growing their imagination are emphasized in this class.

Grade 3

Grade 3 students continue to explore the visual arts through developmentally appropriate experimentation with materials, drawing, painting, sculpting, and imagining. While using a variety of media, students are exposed to different cultures, artists, and genres of art, which are integrated into studies in other disciplines. Through artmaking, students practice more intricate and precise fine motor skills of cutting, gluing, painting with multiple types of brushes, and sculpting. Identifying and using the vocabulary of the elements and the principles of design, caring for materials, cooperating, and sharing ideas while growing their imagination are emphasized in this class.

Grade 4

Grade 4 art continues to focus on honing skills of observation, drawing, painting, and sculpture while bringing students' own voice to their work. These young artists create works reflecting their studies of the rich and varied art of ancient China. Students will recognize style, nature, imagination, experimentation, and the world around them as ripe sources for inspiration in art.

Visual literacy and discussions about aesthetics are integrated in each lesson. Students are encouraged to look at art and cultural history with greater understanding and to discuss and share perceptions and reflections.

Music & Movement

Our Music & Movement program is based on the Orff-Schulwerk approach to music education. This approach is characterized by the inclusion of all students in ensemble work; the unity of music, movement, and speech; the emphasis on process teaching; and the prominence of the student's voice as the centerpiece of all lessons.

Kindergarten

Kindergarten students are engaged in movement activities for a majority of class time, both creative movement and folk dances/singing games. Stories, poems, songs, and works of art are used as the basis for creating music, dances, and dramatizations.

Grade 1

Students are engaged in movement activities for a majority of class time, both creative movement and folk dances/singing games. Stories, poems, songs, and works of art are used as the basis for creating music, dances, and dramatizations. Partner work becomes increasingly more complex throughout the Grade 1 year.

Grade 2
In Grade 2, students are often engaged in small group work in order to strengthen their collaboration skills. Emphasis is placed on creating small musical and dance compositions and dramatizations based on stories, poems, songs, and works of art, which become more complex as the year progresses. Creative dance, rhythm reading, and simple instrumental ensemble pieces with more than one part are skills that are cultivated in Grade 2 Music & Movement.

Grade 3
Grade 3 students continue to work on collaborating in small groups to create music, movement, and dramatizations from stories, songs, poetry, and works of art. Ensemble work features multiple parts happening at the same time, and canon singing is a new skill that is introduced. The tasks assigned to third graders ask them to be increasingly more independent and to take responsibility for creating more complex pieces to share. Technology is used at times to allow students to compose music independently, and students also use digital platforms to create short films.

Grade 4
Grade 4 students continue to work on collaborating in groups to create music, movement, and dramatizations from stories, songs, poetry, and works of art. The recorder is a new instrument that is introduced in the Grade 4 year, allowing students to begin reading music in a very basic way, and to learn the basics of independent practice. Technology is used at times to allow students to compose music independently, and students also use digital platforms to create short films.

Physical Education & Health

Physical education is an integral part of the total education of every child. Students in Kindergarten – Grade 4 participate in physical education classes daily with a physical education specialist. The program of instruction is subdivided by content area to include motor skills, movement concepts, and physical fitness. Within each content area, our specialists have designed a comprehensive curriculum to include developmentally appropriate instruction and performance outcomes that align with the National Standards for Physical Education. In addition to the skills below, physical education creates an opportunity for students to work individually and on a team, in competitive and non-competitive environments, handling winning and losing, and learning how to incorporate sportsmanship into every aspect of class.

Kindergarten Physical Education
Kindergarten instruction includes a specific focus on the basic locomotor movements of running, skipping, galloping, and jumping. Students also begin exploring more complex movements such as throwing, catching, kicking, dribbling, and dance. They are introduced to cardiovascular endurance through active play that encourages continuous movement and builds the foundation for sustained activity. Students are also beginning to learn foundational sportsmanship skills, including sharing space, taking turns, and using kind words with others.

Grade 1 Physical Education
Grade 1 instruction includes a specific focus on the basic locomotor movements of running, skipping, galloping, and jumping. Students also continue learning the process of more complex movements such as throwing, catching, kicking, dribbling, and dance. They develop cardiovascular endurance by participating in longer periods of active movement during games and structured activities. Students are also learning to cooperate with partners and small groups while beginning to respond appropriately to both winning and losing.

Grade 2 Physical Education
Grade 2 students practice basic locomotor skills such as running, skipping, galloping, and jumping and also more advanced locomotor skills such as sliding and leaping. They continue the process of mastering more complex movements such as throwing, catching, kicking, dribbling, and dance. Grade 2 students also begin working on striking with implements, ball handling in basketball, and volleying. They build cardiovascular endurance by maintaining steady participation in moderate-to-vigorous activity during individual and group challenges. Students are strengthening teamwork skills by including others, communicating respectfully, and showing improved control in emotional responses during games.

Grade 3 Physical Education
Grade 3 students practice basic locomotor skills such as running, skipping, galloping, and jumping, as well as more advanced locomotor skills such as sliding and leaping. They continue the process of mastering the more complex movements of throwing, catching, kicking, dribbling, and dance. Grade 3 students continue to practice striking with implements, ball handling in basketball, and volleying. They increase cardiovascular endurance by sustaining higher levels of activity during games and fitness tasks while developing pacing strategies. Students are expected to demonstrate positive sportsmanship by supporting teammates, respecting opponents, and handling game outcomes with increasing independence.

Grade 4 Physical Education
Grade 4 students practice basic locomotor skills such as running, skipping, galloping, and jumping, as well as more advanced locomotor skills such as sliding and leaping. They continue the process of mastering more complex movements such as throwing, catching, kicking, dribbling, and dance. Grade 4 students also practice striking with implements, ball handling in basketball, and volleying. They demonstrate cardiovascular endurance

by sustaining effort across longer, more complex activities and applying stamina to support overall performance. Students consistently show mature sportsmanship by leading with respect, encouraging others, and managing both success and disappointment appropriately in competitive and cooperative settings.

Grade 4 Health

Grade 4 Health is a two-week unit taught in homeroom classes. Students engage in lessons on friendship, healthy relationships and boundaries, and emotional and physical changes they may experience with the onset of puberty.

Library

We want our students to become lifelong readers. We want them to love books, appreciate literature, and become active in the global conversation about books and authors. Following these goals, the Legner Learning Village Library, with a collection of over 15,000 volumes, is available for our students and families to enjoy. Students visit the library each week to learn library skills, select and check out books, research, and spend time reading for pleasure.

The Legner Learning Village Library curriculum blends literature appreciation and reading guidance. Students will be exposed to an array of contemporary authors and illustrators, as well as those classic creators of children's literature. Students will discover more about the authors they enjoy, are encouraged to read across genres in both fiction and nonfiction, and to read books by authors of different cultures.

Fab Lab (Grades 3 & 4)

FAB Lab is an exciting program for Grades 3 & 4 students in the Lower School, providing a structured opportunity for self-directed inquiry work. Inspired by Google's 20% time, it is tailored to nurture the natural curiosity of young learners.

During weekly FAB Lab time, teachers supplement the academic curriculum to instruct and support students in developing the habits and skills of self-initiated learning. This encourages students to explore their own interests, to generate effective questions, to solve problems, to design projects, and to collaborate with others.

While engaging in FAB Lab work, students develop research skills to gather information and increase their digital literacy. Starting with whole-class investigations, students progress to small group work and independent projects over the course of the school year. They practice essential skills of planning, writing, revising, and presenting, while receiving feedback throughout the process from both teachers and peers to guide their iterations.

An integral part of FAB Lab research is for students to share their findings and projects with others. This occurs both with on-campus audiences through presentations, performances, and through digital platforms. FAB Lab empowers students to become lifelong learners: to ask questions, to seek answers, and to follow their passions and interests.

The School admits qualified students of any race, color, national origin, place of birth, ancestry, sex, religion, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, mental or physical disability, or any status protected by applicable law, and extends to them all the privilege to participate in the educational programs generally accorded or made available to students at the School. The School does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin, ancestry, sex, religion, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, mental or physical disability, or any status protected by applicable law in the administration of its admission or its educational programs.







St. Anne's-Belfield School

799 Faulconer Drive | Charlottesville, VA 22903
admission@stab.org | www.stannesbelfield.org | (434) 296-5106

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