

WHY MPH?

10 reasons why MPH Lower School is worth the investment:

- 1) Community is at the heart of MPH. In Lower School, we offer opportunities both on and off-campus to immerse our students in the Syracuse community, build connections and relationships, and enhance their learning that happens in the classroom.
- 2) We appreciate the importance of young, moving bodies and feeding creative minds, therefore our school day balances critical academic instruction in Literacy, Math, Science, and History with opportunities to move, play, dance, create, and explore!
- 3) Our days are designed to be inspiring and engaging, with dedicated time for explicit instruction, group projects and focused individual work, hands-on activities and quiet reflection, making art and playing music, trying new activities and making new discoveries.
- 4) Our Lower School curriculum incorporates Music, Art, Dance, Performing Arts, Social Emotional Learning class, Suzuki strings instruction, Library time, and Core Health.
- 5) Because of our small class sizes, MPH educators create an environment that allows students to have creative and physical outlets, ensuring their minds and bodies are regulated to set the stage for meaningful learning.
- 6) Lower Schoolers have Physical Education (*Core Health*) and recess daily, allowing time and space develop gross motor skills, connect with peers, get outdoors and just be a kid.
- 7) Our Advisory program teaches foundational social and emotional skills: kindness and respect, inclusion and belonging, collaboration and self-advocacy.
- 8) We teach our youngest learners the concept of perspective, to be critical consumers of information, and empower them to view the world through a variety of different lenses all while teaching students how to think critically about how and where they acquire information.
- 9) We offer daily lunch that includes a hot-meal choice, salad bar, soups, and sandwiches as well as nut-free, vegetarian, and gluten-free options.
- 10) Most importantly, we do all of this in an environment that prioritizes authenticity, respect, curiosity and kindness, guiding our youngest learners to develop a strong sense of agency and compassion.



HEAD OF LOWER SCHOOL: Amy Terpening Abdo

**ASSISTANT TO THE HEAD OF LOWER SCHOOL & MPH
EVENTS COORDINATOR:** Alyssa Palmer-Pasquarella

2022-2023 LOWER SCHOOL CLASSROOM TEACHERS

- **Kindergarten** - Emily Gannon (*Teaching Assistant: Karen Brang*)
- **1st Grade** - Shelah Meyer & Carolyn Zimmerman (*Teaching Assistant: Alissa McCall*)
- **2nd Grade** - Kate Berry & Hannah Saloman
- **3rd Grade** - Annette Bund (*Teaching Assistant: Abby O'Reilly*)
- **4th Grade** - Sarah Keser & Gabby Goeglein
- **5th Grade** - Jennifer Concepcion

2022-2023 LOWER SCHOOL ENCORE TEACHERS

- **Literacy** - Colleen Congel
- **World Language Department** - Carolina Freuder (*Spanish*)
- **Core Health Team** - Nichole Demers, Jay Brown, Julia Aguiar, Emma Firenze, Jackie Firenze
- **Visual Arts Department** - Katelyn Capps (*1st - 5th grade*), Chelsea Grantham (*Kindergarten*)
- **Performing Arts Department** - Teresa Mirakian (*Orchestra*), Alexis Wilson (*Dance*), Tyler Eighmey (*General Music, Chorus*), Shawn Davern (*Band*), Arvilla Wendland (*Suzuki lessons*)
- **Student Support Team:** Maria Ricciardiello (*Social Emotional Learning*), Joy Strickland (*School Counselor*), Carlie Evans (*Coverage and Support Teacher*), Chelsea Grantham (*Academic Support*)

LEARNING AND THE BRAIN:

MPH employees have read *Neuroteach* (authors: Glenn Whitman and Ian Kelleher) and we are members of the Center for Transformative Teaching and Learning which follows best practices according to Mind Brain Education (MBE).

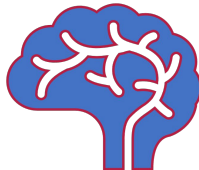
“When students trust the adults around them and trust their peers because school leaders and teachers have worked to create a culture in which all students feel known and respected for who they are, learning can reach that crucial level of being more challenging because students are more likely to take a risk: a risk with a thought, an action, or just the risk of being invested.” (Neuroteach)

The Lower School classroom literacy instruction follows the Science of Reading, “an interdisciplinary body of scientifically-based research about reading and issues related to reading and writing.” MBE research shows that exposure to and regular practice of literacy skills benefits the developing brain, enhancing neuroplasticity and cognitive functions. In order for Lower School students to fulfill their potential as readers, MPH encourages the support of families in setting aside time each day for shared reading with their child/children.

In the Lower School, independent learning will only occur once the specific skill has been explicitly taught, modeled, and practiced in the classroom to ensure that all students have the opportunity to accomplish the task independently and grow in confidence.

“Stress affects memory and...inhibits the everyday long-term memory formation that is crucial to learning.” (Neuroteach)

Expectations for how much a child can accomplish or manage need to be specifically tailored to each child, depending on their age, overall stress level, historical response to schoolwork, and any health history which may complicate learning and could also be aggravated by stress. (Ex: ADHD, Anxiety, Sensory Processing needs, Autism Spectrum, Asthma, Epilepsy, etc.)



THE SCIENCE OF READING

At Manlius Pebble Hill we follow the Science of Reading. To develop skilled readers, this approach focuses on teaching word recognition and language comprehension. We explicitly teach students phonological awareness, decoding skills, and sight recognition while strengthening their background knowledge, vocabulary, language structures, verbal reasoning, and literacy knowledge. This approach can be best shown through the Reading Rope, which illustrates all the elements of literacy that need to be addressed to help students grow into strong readers.

Through our daily literacy instruction work with all K-5 students, we address the language comprehension elements of the Reading Rope. This includes read-alouds, deep discussion, vocabulary development, and writing. Word recognition skills are developed through our daily word work, Foundations, and Heggerty.

We tie science and social studies into our literacy units, allowing us to incorporate hands-on experiments and special projects into our exploration of dynamic topics. Students have the opportunity to share and collaborate with classmates each day.

MPH is one of only two schools in Central New York where all K-5 students receive explicit systematic reading instruction that builds automaticity in word recognition and strengthens language comprehension. MPH is a member of the Syracuse-based Reading League Inc., a nationally recognized nonprofit leader in strengthening teacher practice using the Science of Reading as a foundation.

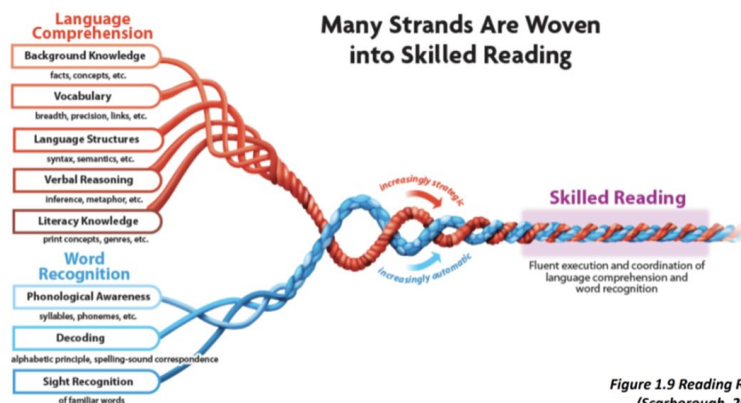


Figure 1.9 Reading Rope
(Scarborough, 2001)

MATH CURRICULUM

Informed by San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD)

The MPH Lower School is guided by the SFUSD (San Francisco United School District) Math Curriculum and the work of Cathy Fosnot, a leader in mathematics education. Conceptual understanding and application are the heart of our LS math program. Procedural fluency develops as mastery in these areas is achieved. The flexibility of the curriculum allows us to embed real-world application, which deeply connects students to math. We build a community where the children are learning and growing as mathematicians; providing opportunities to explore interesting problems, and then engage in crafting solutions, justifications, and proofs of their own making. The teacher facilitates mathematical understanding through powerful questioning and discussions. Students are exposed to a variety of resources, models, manipulatives, and strategies to provide them with diverse tools to utilize and apply. We approach math as a journey – not a destination. The journey to reach the “right answer” is different for each person and this attitude is embraced. We work and learn together. We revise our thinking, try something new, and then try a different approach. We adjust our thinking as we grow and learn more and more.



SPANISH INSTRUCTION

The Spanish courses in the Pre-K through fifth grade help build students' confidence via listening and speaking in the target language. The topics we explore are chosen to reflect students' interests as well as dovetail with parts of their core classroom curriculum. The culture of Spanish speaking countries is highlighted in the Lower School language courses.

The Lower School Spanish Program creates a fun, and challenging environment for its students. Children studying Spanish in the Lower School enter into an experience-based program that provides them with opportunities to use a second language in meaningful and real contexts. The classes rely upon language practice in a variety of modalities: listening to culturally authentic songs, teacher-student interaction, group discussions and activities, and the use of crafts as a way to immerse students in the language.

Most of the work for students in Pre-Kindergarten, Kindergarten, Grade 1 and Grade 2 is orally based, but word recognition and writing single words begin during Kindergarten. This gradual approach lays the foundation for the work students do in grades 3-5. Students are asked to respond to simple phrases and questions and describe themselves and things with minimal detail. By playing games and doing group work, students learn to use the language to communicate.

Starting in 3rd Grade, daily class work consists of a blend of the four modes of communication: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Students interact with each other as well as with the instructor.

Carolina Freuder, Spanish Teacher

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CORE HEALTH

MPH is committed to providing a robust Core Health program in the Lower School. In Core Health class, we work with students to develop leadership and problem-solving skills. Students practice and develop skills to establish and maintain physical fitness, value a healthy lifestyle, and maintain or improve personal health. Daily lesson plans focus on three learning domains: psychomotor, cognitive and affective.

In PreK through 5th Grade Core Health classes, students:

- Perform basic locomotor, manipulative, and non-manipulative skills and attain competency and proficiency in a variety of physical activities.
- Demonstrates a variety of locomotor skills and movement patterns.
- Learn to understand the effects of activity on the body, the risks associated with inactivity, the importance of proper nutrition and the basic components of health-related fitness (cardiovascular, muscle strength, muscle endurance, flexibility, and body composition).
- Demonstrate the knowledge and skills to achieve and maintain a health-enhancing level of physical activity and fitness.
- Gain knowledge in and practice appropriate participant and spectator behaviors to produce a safe and positive environment while respecting self and others
- Engage in opportunities that reinforces core classroom content in a variety of cross curricular physical activities.

Core Health Department

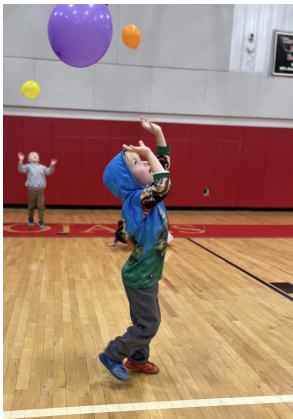
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ART CURRICULUM

The Lower School Art curriculum emphasizes experimentation and investigation of ideas allowing for unforeseen surprises and risk-taking, in a supportive and focused learning environment. The art program fosters creative, critical and collaborative growth through the exploration and discovery of different mediums. During Art, students a range of materials and artistic processes and learn to express themselves and their individuality. Through a variety of projects, an emphasis is placed on fine motor development.

2022-2023 Skills & Topics *(currently covered)*

PreK

- Fine motor skills, Color mixing, Scissor skills

Kindergarten

- Fine motor skills, Identifying and making secondary colors, Artist studies

First Grade

- Cutting and collaging, Multiple-step projects with mixed media, SEL based projects

Second Grade

- Developing shapes and drawing multiple objects, Color theory

Third Grade

- Classic artists. Creating artwork inspired by classic artists work, exploring the uses of water color

Fourth Grade

- Developing confidence within the arts, 3D objects

Fifth Grade

- Integrating mathematical skills with art, optical illusions, one-point perspective



Katelyn Capps, 1st - 5th Art Teacher

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Chelsea Grantham, Kindergarten Art Teacher

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PERFORMING ARTS

Overview of the MPH Performing Arts Curriculum:

- Students in K – 5 take General Music and Chorus classes as part of the MPH Curriculum.
- Students in K – 2 take Movement & More classes as part of the MPH Curriculum.

Community Performances:

- Lower School Winter Concert (performers in grades 3–5)
- Lower School Spring Concert (performers in grades K–5)

Elective Enrichment Opportunities:

- K – 2 Parent & Child Suzuki Strings
- 3 – 5 Band, Orchestra, and Dance Ensembles
- All elective performing arts enrichment during the school day are included in tuition, minus the cost of an instrument.



Lower School General Music & Chorus

Music classes in kindergarten through fifth grade instill a love of music while sequentially building musical knowledge and skills. MPH uses the Quaver curriculum. Quaver integrates music technology and traditional classroom teaching techniques and student activities. Throughout Lower School, students learn the fundamentals of music theory, read music, study music across different cultures and time periods, play various classroom instruments, participate in music technology activities in General Music. All students learn the joy of singing and teamwork through participation in the K–2 and 3–5 Choruses. The benefits of music education include building confidence, teamwork, developing problem-solving skills, developing creative expression, and it is fun!

Lower School Dance

Dance classes in kindergarten through fifth grade focus on fun and building confidence while challenging the entire body, stimulating the mind and the muscles, and developing a knowledge and appreciation of dance. Students build skills in dance, spatial awareness, focus, and critical thinking through lessons centered around creative storytelling, problem-solving, and teamwork. Social-emotional activities in dance use the BrainDance curriculum. These activities begin with preparing students' minds and bodies for class with a warm-up using eight specific movement patterns designed to prepare students for learning by improving body alignment, developing better focus and concentration, and strengthen social and emotional skills. These benefits help our students both in and out of the dance studio. K – 2 instruction focuses on developing these skills and 3 – 5 approaches these skills through preparing for a group ensemble performance.

Performing Arts Department

Teresa Fiorenza Mirakian, Performing Arts Chair & Strings

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Tyler Eighmey, General Music & Chorus

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Alexis “Lexi” Wilson, Dance

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Shawn Davern, Band

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Arvilla Wendland, Suzuki Strings

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SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL NEEDS

Manlius Pebble Hill provides social emotional learning (SEL) lessons in Lower School classrooms that support the MPH Mission, grade level curriculum, and relevant classroom dynamics. Maria Ricciardiello and Joy Strickland assist and facilitate Lower School teachers with behavioral and social/emotional support of students. They collaborate with Lower School teachers to coordinate interventions with students who need support by creating and implementing a plan between teacher/student/family that focuses on student agency and responsibility. Additionally, they carefully monitor and follow-up with teachers, students, and families to facilitate check-ins when interventions are needed.

Joy Strickland, School Counselor

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Maria Ricciardiello, SEL Teacher and Student Support

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