

EDUCATIONAL PRACTICES

Curriculum

You will receive an overview of the class curriculum from your child's teacher at Back-to-School night. Teachers develop their programs from California State Department of Education Frameworks and Standards and Education Task Force (ETF) curriculum guides, which serve as a basis for the sequence of study through each grade level.



The ETF, which was started in 1980, consist of administrative, board and staff representatives from eleven public elementary school districts, one high school district (Tamalpais) and the community college. The purposes are to develop a sequential curriculum in the 'feeder' schools and to raise educational standards. The ETF curriculum also serves as a basis for on-going teacher education and curriculum coordination. ETF is funded in part by a grant from the Marin Community Foundation

Assessment and Testing

On-going assessment of our students' progress is a key element in a successful academic program. Students are assessed in a number of ways: teacher developed tests/quizzes, end of unit tests observation, student self-evaluation, performance assessments. The Standardized Test and Reporting (STAR) and CAT/6 tests are given in grades 2-5. Most assessment activities are on an on-going basis and provide students, teachers and parents with information on day-to-day performance and progress. The CAT/6 is a nationally normed test given statewide in the spring.

General Measurements of Students

Few standards exist to clearly determine whether students are experiencing problems in areas such as self-control, attention, and friendships. To help develop standards for student behavior, school psychologists are authorized to collect information on students not considered to have problems. Parent permission is required for formal assessment. Although facts about these comparison students will be used to get goals for student with school adjustment problems, records will not be made which permits the identification of the comparison students. A parent notice will be sent home with students who have assisted the district in defining academic and conduct standards. (Educational Code 49074, 56303)

Homework Policy

The Ross Valley District's policy statement is available to you upon request. The estimated time for an average student are:

Grades 1 – 3 Monday-Thursday 20-30 minutes per day
Grades 4 – 5 Monday-Thursday 30-60 minutes per day



Homework assignments are appropriate to complete class work, to read from the Literature List, or to do other supplemental reading, to do additional work to remediate skills, to do research and to complete work missed due to absence. For grades 1 - 2, there may not be regular prescribed assignments. However, it is encouraged that the time be used for reading, listening or work completion.

Homework Requests

All homework requests should to be placed through the office to minimize the disruptions to classroom instruction.

Manor School Project-Based Learning

Manor School is committed to instruction using Project-Based Learning (PBL). PBL is:

Student centered learning experiences that approach the complexity of real life, and develop and apply skills and knowledge to create personal meaning.

Project-Based Learning:

- ✎ Taps students' inherent drive to learn
- ✎ Acknowledges students' capability to do important work fulfills students' need to be taken seriously
- ✎ Activates the self-directed, pattern-finding nature of the brain
- ✎ Activates values that are the heart of all expertise, mastery and genuine understanding

We continue to develop and refine project-based work through a district wide committee and grade level meetings, providing time to plan classroom, grade and school wide projects. Students and parents alike report a high level of involvement and satisfaction with Project Based Learning experiences.

Supplementary Education

In addition to the class curriculum as defined by ETF and the teacher, a variety of educational experiences are offered to the students. Assembly programs are selected to stimulate the children in several educational areas. The programs are initiated by the school or by the Parent Club. Such programs may be performances by groups from other schools, or professionals performing in music, dance or drama. Other programs include science, social studies, or related presentations. You may review or recommend potential programs by attending PTA meetings. You are also welcome to attend the assemblies.

Field trips are important multi-sensory experiences outside the classroom. You are welcome to volunteer to drive and to monitor the children.

Multi-Age Program

The Ross Valley School District provides a multi-age program which is housed at Manor School. Brochures describing the program are available in the school office.

Teacher Education

All teachers participate in a variety of in-service programs or meetings on Wednesday afternoons. Many volunteer are elected to serve on committees, such as School Site Council (SSC) and District Advisory Committee (DAC). Teachers attend education conferences and workshops such as those given by the Lawrence Hall of Science, or the Exploratorium, exploring innovative teaching techniques. Within the classroom, teachers participate in training student teachers from Dominican College.