

teachers  
relate  
different  
create  
develop  
understand  
time  
community  
expectations  
grow  
being  
learn  
critical  
thinking  
life  
academic  
students

# TASOK Elementary Overview



2011-2012

## Contents

Elementary at TASOK.....	3
Elementary Language Arts .....	4
Language Arts in Early Elementary .....	5
Language Arts in Upper Elementary.....	7
Elementary Mathematics .....	9
Mathematics in Upper Elementary .....	11
Elementary French .....	12
French in Early Elementary .....	12
French in Upper Elementary .....	12
Art at TASOK.....	14
Art in Early Elementary .....	15
Art in Upper Elementary.....	16
Elementary Physical Education .....	17
Physical Education in Early Elementary.....	18
Physical Education in Upper Elementary .....	19

## Elementary at TASOK

The TASOK Elementary program is founded in the belief that every person is born with a sense of pleasure in exploration and a spirit of delight in discovery, and that the best learning occurs when children feel that they are known, that their ideas are heard, their hopes honored, and their perceptions validated.

Through its design, emphasizing inquiry within multi-dimensional, authentic and experiential learning experiences, the elementary program helps students realize that true learning is unpredictable, and that actively constructing authentic knowledge is more important than finding an easy answer quickly. Asking questions, articulating our ideas, and being able to share our journey toward understanding is as important as finding an answer. Recognizing that there can be more than one right answer, and more than one path to a good answer, is encouraged and highly valued in TASOK's elementary learning community. The program therefore emphasizes rich and holistic, hands-on learning experiences: a program of discovery led by inquiry that remains creative, interactive and playful.

TASOK Elementary recognizes that the best learning takes place in a context that fosters the well being of the whole child. Students' positive social and emotional growth requires a safe, nurturing environment, in which children question and explore freely, that incorporates time for free, unstructured and interactive play. The learning environment, coupled with the curriculum, works actively to validate each child's own sense of the worth of her culture, her language and herself.

The elementary curriculum is child-responsive, flexible and adaptive to meet the needs and engage the spirit and mind of every child. Through instruction differentiated to meet students where they are and engage the interests of all students, and though encouraging student choice, the elementary curriculum helps students begin to understand who they are as learners. Understanding how they learn best leads students towards taking ownership of their own learning.

While empowering students as individuals, the elementary learning environment is also a self-aware community of learners. Learning from and supporting one another in learning is an ongoing theme of the program. The academic year is punctuated with frequent cross-grade learning events that celebrate our intellectual and cultural diversity, and thematic events that celebrate learning and the learning community itself. The Elementary Learner Profile, which names "care, communicate, reflect, think, and inquire" as essential learning behaviors, and "truth, justice and integrity" as essential characteristics of active, socially responsible learners, provides a common reference point for all elementary students.

A good education, above all, helps students to know themselves, and to bring to life their dreams and ideas. The TASOK Elementary program recognizes children as growing people, and honors both who they are and who they will become. In helping students to know themselves, to understand one another, and to imagine their futures, the elementary program invites students to experience and make sense of the world beyond them. From these experiences, students learn to see themselves as an integral part of a rich and changing world.





## Elementary Language Arts

Language is inherently creative and an expression of the self. Learning in language arts therefore requires an environment that honors each student’s identity, ideas, and sense of self. A good education in language arts encourages students’ sense of wonder and delight in their world, and in the many ways there are to explore it.

Success in the language arts is a gateway to success in all disciplines, and in life. A primary purpose of our program is to encourage students to approach literature and books with fascination and delight. In developing their sense of literature’s purpose, students need unstinted access to authentic, challenging literature of inherent literary and human worth. Children in TASOK Elementary read and write, and are read to every day. Responding to literature, sharing and creating are highly valued in our classrooms. In addition to writing within the subject areas, students have plentiful opportunities to read and write according to their own interests, and to develop tastes and preferences in literature.

Reading and literature help students grow, opening minds and expanding imaginations, and allow students to make sense of their experience of the world by giving them access to realms of experience beyond their own. Much of the pleasure and point of literature is that it raises complex issues that may not be resolved, and poses questions that may not be answered, or answerable. Through the practice of inquiry in the language arts students learn to tackle important ideas fearlessly and devise solutions critically and creatively.

Students require a sense of purpose and authenticity in communication, and conversation is vital to literacy, as is challenging discourse. Students learn to express themselves well in reading, writing and speaking when they believe that their ideas are important and valued, and that their voices—whether written or spoken—are heard. Therefore our classrooms are safe and positive, and instruction encourages openness, creativity and intellectual risk-taking, as well as critical thinking in the language arts.

The elementary language arts program uses a comprehensive, flexible and balanced approach to promoting literacy learning, that begins and ends with the idea of making meaning. Teachers draw from within the range of best practices in literacy acquisition to meet the various and evolving needs of all students, with the fundamental understanding that our shared purpose is to create, articulate and interpret effectively.

Students develop confidence through experimentation and unrestricted opportunities to try again. Students in all levels of Elementary learn use a process approach to writing in developing and expressing complex ideas—challenging and improving their work over time. TASOK students also produce large amounts of uncorrected, unedited writing so that they experience the constructive pleasure of direct, spontaneous self expression. As in all the disciplines, articulating their thinking processes in problem-solving is an important part of students’ learning in language arts.

Finally, in developing an awareness of literature across cultures, students gain access to the rich human literary and cultural heritage. And because language forms an essential part of our identities, a student’s learning experience in language arts must also validate her sense of the beauty and inherent worth of her mother tongue and the literature of her home culture.

## Language Arts in Early Elementary

Children in the early elementary school years are curious and full of energy, and bring an abundant enthusiasm to learning. Students at this age are internally focused, so when a foundation of confidence and pride in their identities is in place, students are more open to and appreciative of realms of experience beyond their own. At TASOK therefore we begin our literacy instruction understanding that books and projects are highly personal, and a celebration of identities.

With young learners, reading, writing and other literacy activities are not necessarily done quietly and while seated. Literacy acquisition begins with a strong foundation in oral language; children at TASOK experience responding to and interacting with books dramatically, artistically, musically, and cooperatively, as well as quietly and independently. These are lively, interactive and vocal learning processes.



Kindergarten is a joyful experience in which play and creativity have integral roles. In kindergarten, therefore, reading is an interactive, creative and joyful experience. Children participate in daily read-alouds, engaging with meaning in a variety of ways from predicting what will happen next, to connecting a story to their own lives, and sharing in the reading process by joining in on rhyming and repetition. Kindergarteners are encouraged to explore books freely and begin to develop a sense of personal literary preference.

Corresponding sounds and letters is a critical task in kindergarten and is practiced in both reading and writing. Mechanically, writing is a process ranging from identifying only initial and final sounds of words, to writing words phonetically, to spelling more conventionally. At TASOK, children are supported from their individual places on this continuum. But like reading, writing begins orally. As children speak their stories, they set the foundation for the meaning and conventions of each piece of writing. Students in kindergarten write daily, beginning with single sentence stories that are based on their likes, hopes and feelings. Writing multiple sentences on a single topic is a significant milestone for students at this level. Kindergarteners develop a sense for detail by writing non-fiction texts on observable scientific phenomena, and further their abilities to make thoughtful descriptions about the world through writing poetry.

Art is a major part of the writing process, and kindergarteners create illustration and text together to express meaning.



Students in the first grade are developing longer attention spans, and taking on new roles and responsibilities. They enjoy both structured activities and open-ended experiences. These characteristics support the critical work of first grade, which is learning to become a successful reader: one who uses a variety of strategies to construct meaning from print. Students learn to strategically use a blend of phonics, grammar clues and sense to puzzle out unfamiliar words.

First graders are engaged in literacy activities throughout the day. They are read to from a variety of literary genres; they read with the teacher and with each other, and they read independently beginning from the first days of school. Writing is likewise done cooperatively as well as independently, and for a range of purposes. Students undertake quite a lot of “personal recount” writing, in which they write the stories of their daily lives. Over the course of the year they develop their writing, adding detail and

sensory descriptions. First graders also write expository, objective and informational pieces, exploring the differences between articulating an opinion and relating a fact. In addition to writing in a Writers Workshop model, in which students explore topics of their choosing, students in first grade also write to communicate their understandings in math and science.



Second graders are enjoying their ever increasing literacy abilities and independence. They are developing their own tastes in reading materials, and beginning to move away from the shared experience of picture books, frequently selecting “chapter books” for independent reading. Students explore a variety of methods of responding to literature, often while using graphic organizers such as Venn diagrams, time lines, and webs. They are learning to identify the formal elements of a story, including characters, setting, problem and solution, which naturally to writing their own fiction stories.

The writing process is a significant focus in second grade. Students at this level begin to edit their work, through peer and teacher conferences, and explore the variety of ways they may demonstrate their learning through presentations, projects, and reports. Second graders are becoming more familiar with the basic elements of non-fiction texts, and develop proficiency at using these elements to locate information.

## Language Arts in Upper Elementary

Students in upper elementary school are beginning to see themselves as individuals. They are developing their reasoning skills and sense of responsibility. Students value recognition and approval from their teachers and peers. At TASOK, students in upper elementary school are supported and encouraged to find their own voice and become effective communicators. Our language arts program guides students to explore themselves and their world through literature, expressive writing and meaningful conversation. Although students in upper elementary read and respond in a variety of ways, literature circles play an important role in literacy development. Students engage in many forms of writing which encourage consideration of audience and purpose. While the writing process is emphasized, from draft to publication, students also have many opportunities to explore unstructured creative written expression.



An important feature of language arts in third grade is the introduction of literature circles. Reflecting third graders' natural tendency to create groups, along with their growing need for a sense of belonging, literature circles allow students to develop as independent critical thinkers within a supportive, teacher-structured and student-led framework.

Reading takes on new meaning at this level, as students begin to relate more personally to literary characters and their difficulties. Working in a literature circle, students learn a variety of ways to interact with a novel even as they learn how to interact with their group, developing opinions and analyses, sharing, discussing and writing about literature. Incorporated grammar skills and word study are an integral part of each literature circle as well.

Third graders write purposefully on a variety of topics with specific audiences in mind. Students at this level begin to use the writing process consciously and constructively to organize and develop their thoughts, and to articulate their ideas and feelings in writing. They also have many opportunities for creative expression through journal writing about topics of their choice.



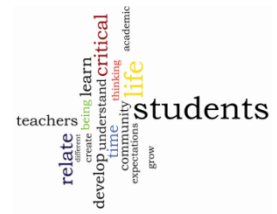
Fourth graders are beginning understand the nature of social groupings and this growing awareness begins to influence choices they make. Students at this level explore effective social strategies through reading and discussing realistic fiction about literary characters with whom they can identify. Fourth grade literature circles emphasize the importance of comprehension and reading for detail, and of understanding story elements in appreciating a story.

Critical thinking becomes an important part of making connections to the text and developing writing skills in fourth grade. Students at this level understand that writing is a process, and that the steps to publication are helpful in creating a successful piece of work. Students spend more time developing and organizing their ideas, while learning about sentence structure and the importance of effective word choice. They edit their work with teacher support, and begin to experiment with peer editing as an additional resource.



In fifth grade students are becoming aware of their ability to influence their peers and the world around them. They read texts that bring in new perspectives of children's lives all over the globe. Many books are chosen to represent cultures of TASOK students, to highlight children's issues worldwide and to present fun and interesting views of childhood. Literature circles allow them to develop their personal opinions and reactions. Connections to text begin with the ability to see aspects of themselves within a text and

find personal relevance in an author's message. This leads to identifying comparisons between texts and finally, to recognizing correlations between events in a novel and events in the world. Students are expected to ask questions and analyze implications of text with peers. They may find the opportunity to debate or defend an opinion or be swayed to accept another's point of view. Students are not only learning to form their own ideas and opinions, but they are also learning to use facts to support their ideas as part of constructed responses. In writing, students present their drafted ideas to peers and are encouraged to engage in thoughtful dialogue about their ideas, answer questions and receive constructive feedback about potential areas of revision or improvement. Reflective writing allows students the opportunity to express themselves and explore their experiences in a free flowing manner. Select pieces may be chosen for further examination and revision leading to formal publication.



## Elementary Mathematics

Discovering a mathematical problem can be as exciting as solving it. A good education in mathematics is active, hands-on, engaging and experimental, encouraging delight in exploration and discovery. The TASOK elementary math program provides a supportive learning environment that fosters intellectual fearlessness and a spirit of inquiry, and encourages students to develop a sense of ownership in their learning.

The elementary math curriculum focuses on essentials, allowing students to explore important ideas extensively and develop deep and transferable skills and understandings.

Elementary math emphasizes the importance of problem-solving. Students have ongoing opportunities in math to consider real-world, authentic problems involving mathematics across disciplines, and are encouraged to seek multiple ways of finding good solutions. Students need to be able to use mathematical tools—whether abstract like an algorithm, or concrete like a calculator—appropriately, creatively, and effectively.

Students are better able to learn when they understand themselves as learners and can articulate their thinking processes. A central facet of the elementary math program at TASOK connects problem-solving with the practical art of articulating our thinking, in discussion and in writing. At TASOK, being able to say how you arrived at an answer, and discuss its strengths and weaknesses, can be as important as arriving at a good answer quickly.

Each student learns differently. It is a foundational precept of the TASOK Elementary program that good education addresses the needs and interests of all students, through differentiation in instruction and assessment. Good assessment in math is a learning opportunity for students, and should be as creative and differentiated as math instruction.

As everywhere in the curriculum, students learn math best when they feel safe and supported, and celebrated for who they are and what they can do. Our approach to teaching mathematics actively and consciously addresses each child’s learning readiness.

Finally, an important element of elementary math is its international character. Our students are international, and our math curriculum supports them in developing fluency in understanding and moving amongst systems of measurement.

## Mathematics in Early Elementary

Students in Early Elementary think about mathematics primarily in concrete and creative terms. They construct their own understanding of problems and ways of determining solutions through exploration. Our students use lots of hands-on materials as they pursue a variety of authentic and relevant mathematical investigations. A critical aspect of learning is reflecting on one's thinking and problem solving processes. As children grow and as their language abilities improve, they become better able to identify, articulate and develop their mathematical reasoning.



Kindergarten students play with math. In kindergarten, math is a visual and tactile exploration, most often experienced through the use of manipulatives such as pattern blocks and counters that children use to investigate geometry, patterns, counting and basic operations. Math is frequently an aesthetic experience for kindergarteners, who design, analyze and discover patterns, create images using shape tiles, and incorporate shapes into their artwork.

Kindergarten students are already beginning to experiment with their own methods of problem solving, and are beginning to express their thinking verbally. Students explore the meaning of numbers through addition and subtraction based on simple problems and using concrete materials, in considering the real-life problems of daily kindergarten life—such as how many children are absent or how much something or someone has grown. Reading, writing and counting to 100 is a big milestone in early elementary, and one that all kindergarteners work toward.



One of the big goals for the first grade math program is for students to develop and internalize the concept that math makes sense. Rather than simply memorizing algorithms for problem-solving, first graders are given the time necessary to grapple authentically with problems and pursue them deeply, exploring many ways to find solutions that make sense to them. Students develop numeracy with this concept in mind, searching for the patterns of math. The commutative property of addition, the way addition and subtraction are related, patterns on the hundred chart, and place value are examples of big investigations first graders undertake.

A critical feature of math time is reflecting on one's learning, sharing ideas and strategies, and learning from each other. First graders explore topics such as measurement, data representation and fractions through investigations that are meaningful to them. Opportunities for reading and writing are interwoven with math.



Second graders are becoming more proficient with their numeracy and basic computational skills, and their use of mathematical vocabulary. They are eager to work with larger numbers and to explore their application in real world problems. A big idea in second grade includes addition and subtraction with regrouping; therefore, having a strong number sense, basic addition and subtraction strategies and understanding of place value are the crucial foundations on which we build. Students continue to enjoy math problems with real-life and concrete applications. Students explore a wide variety of standard and metric units of measurement through baking, for example, and represent, compare and analyze data they have chosen to collect about their classmates.

As their literacy and reasoning improve, students are exposed to word problems with greater frequency. Students in second grade are coming to understand that there is more to solving a problem than simply arriving at the right answer, and practice explaining their thinking in writing.

## Mathematics in Upper Elementary

Children in upper elementary school are able to share fairly and are beginning to understand concepts of justice. They realize that equality may look different depending on individual student needs. Reasoning skills emerge as students begin to think more critically about cause and effect relationships. They are able to investigate mathematical concepts in logical, practical ways and are eager to develop more complex skills. Up to this point the majority of math exploration has involved the use of manipulatives and visual, concrete thinking. Upper elementary students continue to establish real life connections through relevant applications. They may be cooking, planning an event, conducting a science experiment or participating in other cross-curricular activities. While math remains a hands-on experience, there is also a new focus on developing abstract thinking skills. This focus comes with an emphasis on asking students to express, in writing, their reasoning process and clarify their thinking.



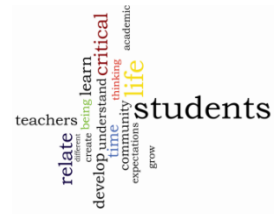
Third grade students are introduced to a variety of problem solving strategies as they learn about place value, fractions, patterns and mathematical relationships, and begin to understand that there may be more than one way to arrive at a correct answer. Developing fluency with the multiplication table is a real milestone for third graders, and crucial in paving the way toward increased fluency in mathematical thinking and building more complex math ideas. Students quickly discover the practical uses of these operations in real-life situations, and this makes learning exciting and meaningful.



Fourth grade students develop deeper understandings of basic operations and their properties, and solve complex word problems. They build on their ability in abstract thinking by solving algebraic equations with variables, and continue to explore multiplication and division with larger numbers, and apply these operations in solving real-world problems. Students in fourth grade also gather, graph and analyze mathematical data.



Students in fifth grade are mastering many of the concepts they were introduced to at the beginning of upper elementary school. Building on their sound knowledge of multiplication and division, they are learning to comprehend and solve multiple-step problems. New concepts include understanding place value from the millions to millionths and applying basic operations to decimals. Students also explore the relationships between decimals and fractions. They begin to investigate statistics with an introduction to ratios, probability and percentages.



## Elementary French

TASOK’s students are culturally and linguistically diverse. By the time they begin school, most have been exposed to a number of languages, and are intrigued by the idea of learning French. The elementary French program builds upon students’ natural propensity for language learning through focus on communication for daily life and on sharing important ideas, and by maintaining a creative, supportive and busy learning environment.

At all levels the program fosters cultural and social awareness. Children learn not only how to greet one another in French, but also how important it is to greet someone appropriately, and to recognize that appropriate greeting differs from one culture to another, and within cultures. The program fosters students’ understanding and appreciation for the cultural differences among them, as well as for their shared, common ground.

French one of the languages of our host county, and children are encouraged to develop their confidence in speaking French as well as their appreciation for our host culture through interacting in French with their peers at school, with family and friends at home, and in the community.

## French in Early Elementary



The program at this level exposes students to French language and introduces them to the fundamentals of pronunciation and vocabulary for their daily lives. Students learn such basics as pronunciation of the French alphabet and numbers from one to thirty-one, the names of colors, days and months, and familiar animals, as well as conversation basics such as introducing one’s self, describing one’s family and expressing preferences.

Students at this level focus on listening and speaking skills. We explore such essentials as how to greet or thank someone, the importance of correct pronunciation, and effective communication with peers.

Assessment in early elementary French is ongoing and qualitative, through daily oral review and class discussion.

## French in Upper Elementary



TASOK students are diverse in linguistic and cultural background and by third grade, vary greatly in their experience with French. The upper elementary program is therefore differentiated to accommodate students with no prior experience with French, as well as those who have had considerable exposure to the language.

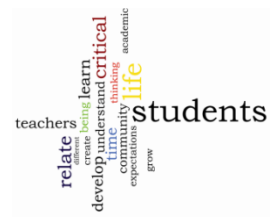
Upper elementary students are sociable and interested in the issues of the world around them. The program encourages them to share, in French, ideas about the things that matter to them in their daily

lives, and to explore the real world problems about which they are becoming increasingly aware. Students learn about and develop appreciation for one another, even as they develop their global and cultural awareness through study of the richness and variety of the multi-cultural francophone world.

In upper elementary French students use regular and irregular verbs in the present tense, and ask and respond to questions. They are also beginning to develop autonomy in decoding French words and investigating their meanings. In addition to learning such basics as numbers, colors and familiar objects, students explore practical, daily-life matters, such as how to greet people appropriately and introduce themselves, discuss family, friends and relationships, tell time, express preferences, indicate directions, talk about school and work, clothes and style, and describe their cities and cultures.

Effective communication is the central focus of the course, and students in upper elementary spend considerable time in discussion about things that matter to them: school and family life, relationships, our global society, respect, health, sport and pastimes.

Students at this level want to speak French in the broader community, and are ready to assess their own progress in authentic contexts. Students are evaluated regularly as they progress through the program through daily oral review, class discussion, listening comprehension evaluations and formal quizzes.



## Art at TASOK

The TASOK art program provides students an opportunity to understand and explore their own unique creative sense and abilities, while connecting the ideas and creation of art to human history and humanity. The program encourages students to create art that expresses the self—emotionally, intellectually and academically—and to respond to art in these same ways.

Because art expresses the very essence of human experience, through study and practice students learn that art changes our world as it reflects our identities, our histories, our hopes and our fears. Through art, students are able to form an appreciation and awareness for the creative world in all its contexts: social, historical and personal. Through this appreciation students also come to recognize that art often expresses thoughts, ideas or messages, and that the same idea can be explored throughout the arts, be it visual art, drama, music, literature or dance.

The Art program helps students refine their observational skills – learning to truly see and not judge what one is viewing, while creating an artwork. At the same time students explore the ways that art relates to them personally, gaining confidence as critics, interpreters and creators of art. The TASOK art program encourages independent thought, and values uniqueness and individuality.

Students work in drawing and painting, multi-media composition, printmaking, three-dimensional construction and sculpture. The TASOK art program is a hands-on, experimental environment for students that offers guided instruction and encouragement in free creativity. At every level students develop, and learn to understand, their own creativity, in the recognition that persistence in the face of challenge is an essential part of making and improving art.

The practical elements and principles of art, including line, value, color, texture, emphasis, pattern, unity, balance, movement, rhythm, contrast, shape, form and space, are foundational and form a learning focus for students at every level. Through development of these essential building blocks of the visual arts, students develop practical ability to critique art, and to improve upon their own work.

Through art, students develop their qualities as individual and critical thinkers. Art allows students at all levels to address their innate need for a creative outlet in life.

The TASOK art program encourages students to recognize that along with finding one’s individual voice, an essential part of being an artist is learning to present one’s work effectively, and sharing it fearlessly. The program provides an environment in which curiosity and mistakes are essential, and in which student and teacher voices are shared, and all learn from one another—whether in discovering identity as artists, developing abilities, or building confidence and self-esteem.

## Art in Early Elementary



Art in early elementary focuses upon the beginnings and the ripening of individual creativity. Students at this foundational level begin to develop an appreciation for artwork and its creation, and for what it means to be an artist. Students in art find space to enjoy expressing themselves and the world around them in visually, and are encouraged to experiment, imagine, think freely and take pride in their work. The program helps students to realize that authentic creativity is unpredictable, and to embrace the beauty of the unexpected: what we created by mistake is sometimes more wonderful than what we had set out to achieve.

Art allows students to think and express themselves visually, addressing the innate need to have a creative outlet. Students in early elementary encounter an environment in which mistakes, curiosity and growth are essential in discovering both who they are, and essential truths about the world around them. Art fuels the creative mind of the child, building positive self-esteem and confidence, and fostering fundamental skills in observation, coordination, patience and understanding. Art ties the students to their shared history as humans, as well as encourages their own individual imaginations and dreams.

Students in early elementary practice the use of artistic tools, such as scissors, glue, pencils, crayons, markers and paint, and learn to care for and manage them in the studio space. Students explore color and paper crafts, building, cutting, tearing and pasting, working from models, memory, or their imaginations.

Art studies, which allow students to explore in depth the work of a single artist, an artistic movement or school, are integrated with hands-on, creative activities.

Students also begin the long process of learning to reflect upon their own artwork and the artwork of others. Elementary students begin assembling and developing portfolios, reflecting upon their work and their growth as artists over time. Displays of student work allows student to reflect upon and learn from the work of their peers, and helps them see themselves as part of a diverse community of artists. All elementary students participate in the school's art shows.

Units of learning for lower elementary consider the timeline of human and art history, as well as the elements and principals of visual art.

## Art in Upper Elementary



Art for the upper elementary continues its focus upon the realization of students' individual creativity, with increased complexity and depth. Students deepen their understandings and respect for art and its role in the human experience as they learn to think more deeply about their own art, and relate more personally to the artwork of others.

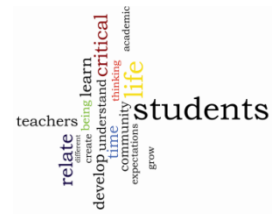
Increased autonomy in upper elementary leads students to a richer appreciation of the artist's craft. Students at this level assume more responsibility for the practical aspects of making art such as preparation of materials and surfaces, maintenance of tools and media, as well as its theoretical aspects, beginning with the challenge of conceiving an idea for exploration.

By fueling the creative mind of the child, and developing fundamental skills in observation, coordination, patience and understanding, art protects the fragility of childhood interest in the world. Students in upper elementary art build confidence and self-esteem working creatively in an environment in which curiosity, growth and mistakes are essential not only in discovering the world around them, but in discovering who they are as artists and individuals. And in addition to learning to create art independently, students come to see themselves as integral parts of a whole: each artist brings something unique to the studio. Art ties the students to their shared history as humans, while encouraging their own individual imaginations and dreams.

While the focus of art in upper elementary remains primarily practical and creative, students in upper elementary also learn through focused art studies, in which they explore the work of a single artist, a movement, or school, or investigate a common theme expressed by several artists.

Students at this level reflect more deeply, critically and analytically upon their own artwork and that of others. Upper elementary students continue their work on their portfolios, reflecting upon their work and their growth as artists over time. Displays of student work allows student to reflect upon and learn from the work of their peers, and helps them see themselves as part of a diverse community of artists. All elementary students participate in the school's art shows.

Units of learning are developed around the timeline of human and art history, as well as the elements and principals of visual art. Looking at art over time and across cultures, in its complex social, historical, political and personal contexts, allows students to build understandings of the relationship between art, ideas and the human experience.



## Elementary Physical Education

All children take joy in movement and play, whether alone or in the company of others. The fundamental goals of TASOK’s elementary physical education program are to help children explore and take pleasure in their physical abilities and strengths, to foster their appreciation for independent and team games, and to lay the groundwork for a lifetime of physical health and well being.

Students in elementary PE develop self confidence through taking part in all activities, with students at all ability levels. Students enjoy a wide range of games, activities and sports that foster their strengths in balance, movement acquisition and body control, and teach the importance of focus, patience and understanding in developing new abilities. Children in elementary PE experiment freely and without fear of failure, in the understanding that trying something new is part of how we grow, and that making mistakes is part of the learning process.

Sportsmanship is an important component of TASOK’s PE program, and having fun is essential.

At this level, students are learning to work and move in a safe environment, developing respect for themselves and their bodies, and each other, as well as for the equipment and the environment they work in. *Why is it so important to create space?* is an essential question we explore in elementary PE.

The program’s Wellness element emphasizes the importance of regular exercise and healthy eating, and of resting and sleep in maintaining a healthy body.

Students in elementary take a weekly swimming class as part of their program, which incorporates fun and development of confidence in the water as important ingredients. Priority is placed upon safety in the water, as well as learning the basic movements of the main swimming strokes.

## Physical Education in Early Elementary



Early elementary students learn simple gymnastic movement. They practice throwing and catching, running, jumping and rolling. Students at this level are beginning to learn to work with their peers, participating in simple partner and small-group work. “How can my teammates help me improve?” is an important essential question for students at this level.

Students in early elementary participate in a range of simple skills activities, in the course of which they learn to manipulate balls of various size, shape and weight, and many other sporting objects. Students in early elementary practice following simple directions, and moving safely in their own personal space.

At this level students begin to use the language associated with keeping healthy and staying in good physical condition. We explore safety in movement and sport, and what it means to be aware of others on the field, and the ideas of daily lifestyle and wellness, including the importance of staying hydrated, wearing appropriate clothing and footwear, and using sun protection.

Assessment is ongoing during the normal activities of the program, and students are encouraged to recognize their growth and their successes throughout. By the end of early elementary students are able to demonstrate knowledge of movement concepts, principles and strategies, and follow basic rules of a variety of simple games and understand instructions from a teacher or referee.

Essential questions for this level include: *What does it mean to have a healthy body? Why does what I had for lunch matter? How can I help my eyes and my hands work together? How do I get better at playing this game, and how does practice help? How can my teammates help me to improve, and how can I help them?*

## Physical Education in Upper Elementary



Children in upper elementary are beginning to demonstrate more refined motor skills and are able to perform more complex movement patterns. At this level students participate in many activities which incorporate the basic skills required to play complex sports such as soccer, basketball and volleyball. Students add to their skills bank, practicing passing, pulling and pushing, small scrum work and kicking techniques.

In small team games such as hockey, students learn to be experimental in their approach to learning. They learn what it is like to be in a team and the importance of helping teammates in order to outwit and outmaneuver an opponent.

Students in upper elementary are aware of the ideas of fitness, and are beginning to work consciously to improve fitness and levels of stamina. At this level students develop more sophisticated understandings of the human body, including the role of the heart and various muscle groups, and learn how to prepare for and recover following vigorous physical activity. Wellness learning includes the importance of a healthy diet and of staying hydrated, wearing appropriate clothing and footwear for sport, and using sun protection.

Students at this level create simple gymnastic routines, which might include forward and backward rolls, cartwheels, headstands, handstands and other basic movements. Towards the end of grade 5 students are able to perform fluently and competently the four major swimming strokes. By grade 5 students participate in long-distance running, and think critically about improvement in fitness, stamina and skills. They understand the role of strategy, practice, mental agility and persistence in fitness, games and sport, and the importance of participating with peers.

Students are continuously assessed in their physical performance, their interactions with one another, and in their understanding of games and the skills required to play them. By the end of fifth grade, a student should understand the importance of maintaining a healthy body and have experience in a wide range of games and activities, in preparation for middle school.

Essential questions at this level include: *How can I be a successful team player? Why does warming up matter? What does it mean to warm down? Why is continuous practice of athletic activities, and of skills like ball work, so important?*