

Early Childhood
Program of Studies

2017 - 2018

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OUR MISSION

St. Johnsbury Academy is a diverse, comprehensive, and independent educational community grounded by our traditions, our deep optimism regarding young people, and our commitment to academic excellence:

Character: To teach good character by modeling and fostering compassion, respect, responsibility, and integrity.

Inquiry: To foster a love for learning by challenging individuals to pursue knowledge, creativity, and intellectual self-reliance.

Community: To encourage each individual to understand his or her relationships, rights, and responsibilities within a community that is itself part of the larger world.

Our culture fosters a tradition of respect for all members of our community, regardless of their nationality, ethnicity, cultural background, or economic status.

OUR THREE PROMISES

We will do all we can to help each student be the best person possible.

We are committed to the values of respect, compassion, integrity, and responsibility. We have compassion and empathy and we believe in loving those most who need it most.

We will do all we can to help each student be the best learner possible.

We value expertise and creativity. We provide the supports and opportunities for students to pursue their passion and develop a love for learning.

We will do all we can to help each student become part of something bigger than him/herself.

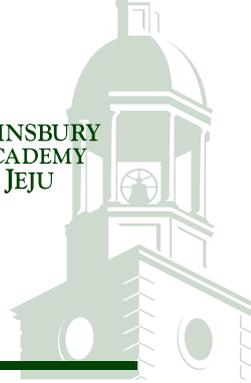
When students come to our school they become part of the most talented and diverse group of individuals they may ever know as friends and colleagues. They develop an intellectual and emotional connection to making this community a better place.

OUR PHILOSOPHY

Employing innovative and traditional methodologies, the school is committed to personally relevant instruction. We strive to provide opportunities for students to gain a strong understanding in those studies calculated to provide a life foundation for the global citizen, enabling them to be intellectually self-reliant and to function as constructive, moral members of society.

Likewise, the school undertakes to make the acquisition of knowledge a valued social goal by developing an active appreciation of local and world culture. The school also provides opportunities for its students to build those skills useful for personal self-sufficiency.

St. Johnsbury Academy Jeju is committed to the idea that learning is most natural and teaching is most effective in a community atmosphere where collaboration and respect for others is part of the common daily business. Small classes, the advisor program, and a diverse offering of extracurricular activities all exist to support this notion of community.



The SJA Jeju Curriculum

Inquiry-based Learning

The Saint Johnsbury Academy Jeju (SJA Jeju) academic program is based upon the principles of an inquiry-based curriculum. While inquiry-based learning comes in all shapes and sizes and with a varying number of steps in a variety of different school settings, these curricula all share a common thread regarding the processes of investigation and learning that are circular and recursive by nature:

Immerse / building curiosity and background knowledge

Investigate / students research the subject; they ask questions, look for and find answers

Coalesce / more succinct searching occurs, summarizing, and building new knowledge

Go Public / students share what they have learned with other students and/or other audiences

Inquiry-based Instruction

Within the framework of this elementary school program of studies, our faculty strives to keep inquiry at the center of each academic lesson. The teachers also utilize standards (and more specifically, their benchmarks) to establish the learning goals for the students. Unit and lesson plans are developed to ensure that students are able to demonstrate their learning as measured against the standards and benchmarks.

At SJA Jeju subject specific standards and benchmarks are mainly drawn from the United States', Common Core State Standards (CCSS), New Generation Science Standards (NGSS) and AERO curriculum framework, which is supported by the State Department's Office of Overseas Schools and also from the United States. Please note carefully the following important definitions and explanations.

Standards

A standard (or more specifically, a content standard) is a broad statement of what we want our students to know, understand, or be able to do in a subject area. A standard is usually consistent across all grades in a subject area. As students progress from one grade level to the next they develop a deeper understanding of these standards.

Benchmarks

A benchmark is a detailed description of a specific learning goal within a standard, expected of students for a particular grade or course. A benchmark is always stated in terms of student learning and is measurable.

Understanding by Design

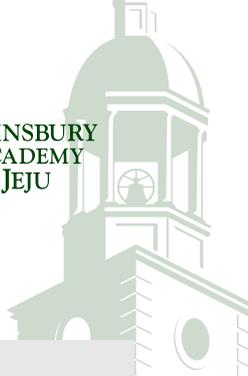
Teachers at SJA Jeju use the Understanding by Design (UbD) framework for unit planning. By employing this framework to design units of study, learning is focused on the understanding of the grade-specific benchmarks and the broader overarching standards. Teachers begin to design units with the learning goals (standards and benchmarks) in mind from the start.

All classroom instruction, learning activities and assessments are designed to facilitate students' engagement with and understanding of the standards and benchmarks linked to the unit. Educational resources are also selected to help foster students' understanding of the unit's specific learning goals. At SJA Jeju the unit design process is a collaborative effort that encourages teachers to share their professional expertise with each other.

Assessment and Reporting

Teachers assess students on an ongoing basis. Our faculty work together to develop, review and revise common assessments. This approach helps to ensure assessment accuracy and it provides data from a variety of sources to guide instruction. Teachers report on student progress both formally and informally with parents and students throughout the school year. Progress is communicated through report cards, conferences, assessments and additional meetings as needed.

The Early Childhood Classroom



Saint Johnsbury Academy Jeju offers an Early Childhood program for children who are 3 to 5 years old. In Early Childhood we are inspired by the Reggio Emilia approach, which provides a nurturing environment that encourages children's natural curiosity and interest in learning. We offer a wide spectrum of developmentally appropriate opportunities, which are tailored to each child. This marks the beginning of the SJA Jeju learning journey.

We recognize that children thrive when their social, emotional, creative, intellectual, and physical needs are met through play. Our Early Childhood is comprised of Pre-Kindergarten 3 (PK3), Pre-Kindergarten 4 (PK4) and Kindergarten groups. Our classrooms are stimulating and developmentally appropriate. Our program emphasizes hands-on, play-based inquiry learning that supports the development of foundational skills. At SJA Jeju, children experience a stimulating and creative environment where they can learn their English language skills through a wide range of activities. Such activities include explorations into literacy, math, science, social studies, arts, dramatic play, cooking, music and movement, technology, and sensory play.

Throughout the SJA Jeju experience, we lay the foundation for lifelong learning skills. We believe the Early Childhood students should be respected as capable, curious, inquisitive and full of abilities and ideas. The teachers co-construct in-depth investigations with the students so that each child is actively involved with their studies. In their investigations, students use the strategies of mathematicians, scientists, authors, and artists. The teachers encourage the students to observe, question, hypothesize, and experiment in authentic, meaningful investigations, so the children's learning extends beyond basic skills.

Our beautiful indoor and outdoor environments invite children to play, discover, and learn naturally. As a result, students leave the Early Childhood Program excited about learning and with the ability and confidence to succeed in the next stages of their education.

The Early Childhood Program Teaching Lifelong Learning Skills

The SJA Jeju Early Childhood Program is inspired by the Reggio Emilia philosophy of education that originated in Northern Italy. SJA Jeju does not actually duplicate this philosophy because the children, families and teachers of Korea offer a different culture, location and perspective. Rather, the Reggio Emilia philosophy is an approach to teaching, learning and advocacy for children. In its most basic form, it is a way of observing what children know, are curious about and what challenges them. Teachers record these observations to reflect on developmentally appropriate ways to help children expand their academic and social potentials. Long-term projects connect core academic areas in and out of the classroom.

Principles of the Reggio Emilia Approach to Education

The following principles will guide the practice and decisions made in the SJA Jeju Early Childhood Program and are borrowed from Foundations of the Reggio Emilia Approach.

Image of the Child

Children are viewed as competent, curious, full of potential, and interested in connecting to the world around them. Teachers are deeply aware of children's viewpoints and abilities. All children have

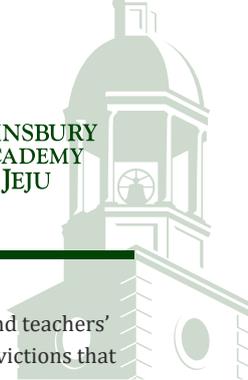
interest in engaging in social interactions, establishing relationships and constructing their learning in their surrounding environments. The children also make and correct their own mistakes, allowing for them to practice creative problem solving skills.

Collaboration and Interaction

Collaboration and cooperation are intentional in a school inspired by the Reggio Emilia approach to education. The child-centered curriculum is emergent in nature and is based on the interest of the children. Children construct their own knowledge through a carefully planned curriculum that engages and builds upon their current understandings. Student work collaboratively and cooperatively in small groups in hands-on activities and the teacher plays the role of the facilitator to intentionally engage the children in meaningful work and conversations. Most importantly, teaching becomes a two-way relationship in which teacher's understanding of the child is just as important as the child's understanding of the teacher.

The Environment

The indoor and outdoor environments are purposefully designed to be the "third teacher" to encourage intrigue and curiosity from careful placement of materials and supplies. Teachers intentionally organize, support and plan for various spaces for children and the environment serves as an invitation to explore and investigate. The most visible aspect of the classroom walls are displaying the documentation panels, children's work and investigations, and natural artifacts. The layout of



the Early Childhood area is meant to be welcoming to all that enter, foster encounters between all member of the community and promote communication and relationship building.

The Power of Documentation

The teacher’s role is to be an observer, documenter, facilitator and co-learner. The teacher documents interactions, thinking and learning using many medias including notes, videos, photographs, reflections and much more. Documentation is carefully arranged by the teacher for parents to become aware of their child’s experiences at school. Documentation is also used to reflect on activities and the depth of knowledge gained, make children aware that their efforts are values, and provides information about the children’s learning and progress that cannot be demonstrated by tests and checklists.

Emergent Curriculum

Emergent curriculum is a way of teaching and learning that requires teachers to observe and listen to the children. Teachers ask questions and listen for the children’s ideas, hypotheses and theories. After observing children in action, the teachers compare, discuss, and interpret their observations. Teachers plan activities, studies and long term projects in the classroom based on their observations. Teachers partner with children and the exchange of theories are referred to as the “Cycle of Inquiry”. Teachers use their interpretations, intentions and goals (social, emotional and academic) to set up learning areas and investigations in the classroom. Learning is seen not as a linear process but as a circular progression.

The Hundred Languages of Children

Children have the capacity for representing ideas in a wide variety of symbolic and graphic modes. Children need to develop the tools to investigate and make sense of an object about which they are curious. The approach emphasizes the importance of children’s symbolic language. The hundred “languages” are the many modes of expression, such as speech, writing, movement, drawing, painting, sculpture, collage and music, through which children communicate and learn about their world. Teachers learn to listen to the “100 Languages” that children use to express themselves as individual learners.

The Role of the Teacher

The image of the child shapes the role of the teacher and involves four major components. Teachers are:

Co-constructors: partners, facilitates, guides, nurtures, problem solves, learns, hypothesizes

Researchers: learns, connects, observes, revisits, reflects, plans, preps

Documenters: listens, observes, records, displays, revisits

Advocates for children: supports, values, protects, questions, collaborates, presents, nurtures

Investigations

Investigations provide the backbone of the children’s and teachers’ learning experiences. They are based on the strong convictions that learning by doing is of great importance and that to discuss in a group and to revisit ideas and experiences is the primary way of gaining better understanding and learning. Investigation ideas come from both the children and teacher experiences, curiosities or problems posed. They can last from a few days to several months.

The Role of Parents

Parents are an essential component of the school. They are an active part of their children’s learning experiences and help to ensure the welfare of all the children in the school. All families are members of the school community and partners in their child’s learning. At SJA Jeju parents are encouraged to be involved in our community.

Social/Emotional Skills

Social and emotional learning is crucial in the development of young children through interaction with others. Students begin to recognize and name their own feelings as well as empathize with others. They begin to develop conflict resolution skills needed to regulate their emotions, behavior, and attention. Skills for entering into social groups, developing friendships, learning to help, and other pro-social behavior are an important part of the program.

Language Arts

The goal of the Language Arts curriculum is to develop confident and independent readers, writers, speakers, and listeners with the aim of better understanding and positively impacting the world. Students are supported in their development using a balanced literacy approach which provides differentiated instruction within the model of instruction. Language and literacy learning occurs throughout the day and is a part of classroom activities and experiences.

Oral Language

The students will use effective oral and aural communication skills in a variety of settings, both individually and in groups. Students will have the opportunity to develop their oral speaking skills through role-play, conversations, re-telling stories and solving conflicts with their peers.

Reading

The students will be immersed in a print-rich environment. They will be exposed to word and letter sound correspondence and integrating basic phonetic principles. These concepts and skills are taught through direct instruction, individual and small-group activities, and exploration of books and other print material. When reading and listening to both fiction and nonfiction texts, students will have opportunities for both group and individual response.



Writing

The students explore the letters and sounds of the alphabet through a variety of activities. At the student’s readiness, they will begin to identify connection between letter and sounds as well as print and meaning. As their knowledge of letter-sound correspondence and site vocabulary increases, they will begin to transfer these thoughts and ideas to paper.

Mathematics

Students are provided opportunities to describe and explore the relationships between objects and materials. It is embedded in children’s active, hands-on play with real objects. Students use their senses to build an understanding of number and its relationship to object quantities. Mathematical terms are integrated into everyday conversation to facilitate learning as students’ use naturally occurring events that encourage critical thinking skills through open-ended questioning.

Counting and Cardinality
Operations and Algebraic Thinking
Measurement and Data
Geometry

At every grade a focus is placed on mathematical practices. These practices rest on important “processes and proficiencies” with longstanding importance in mathematics.

- The Eight Standards for Mathematical Practice are:**
1. Make sense of problems and persevere in solving them
 2. Reason abstractly and quantitatively
 3. Construct viable arguments and critique the reasoning of others
 4. Model with mathematics
 5. Use appropriate tools strategically
 6. Attend to precision
 7. Look for and make use of structure
 8. Look for and express regularity in repeated reasoning

Science

The goal of the Science Curriculum is to develop curious inquirers who think critically about the world around them. Teachers provide an active approach to learning that includes a strong emphasis on student interaction.

Students use their five senses to observe, explore and experiment. Simple tools are used to collect data so they can document and represent their findings. Scientific terms are integrated into everyday conversation to facilitate learning as students’ use naturally occurring events that encourage critical thinking skills through open-ended questioning.

Social Studies

The goal of the Social Studies curriculum is to develop responsible global citizens who demonstrate respect and tolerance for others and cross-cultural understanding. Social Studies learning focuses on children’s personal experiences and their initial understanding of themselves in relation to their families and homes. Teachers facilitate this learning by helping them engage in active investigations, individually and in groups, which build on familiar experiences.

Students contribute to the well being of their classroom and the community, including care for the social and physical environments in which they live. Through this they develop an overall sense of belonging. This environment enables them to build on their understanding of diversity in culture, family structure, ability, language, age, and gender. They explore their social roles in the family and school through play. They will learn and share about the community in which they live and engage in discussions about fairness, friendship, responsibility, authority, and differences.

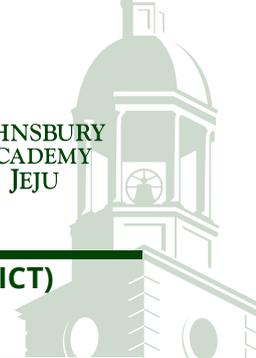
Counseling

The Elementary School Counseling Program is a vital resource for working with students, teachers, and parents to ensure the social, emotional, and academic success of our students. This support is delivered through whole class lessons, one-on-one time with students, group work with students, support and consultation with families and teachers. The focus of the Counseling Program is to encourage the 3 Promises that our school is based upon:

- Be the best person possible:** We value respect, compassion, integrity, and responsibility. We act with respect for ourselves, for others, and the work that we do. We have compassion and empathy and we believe in loving those most who need it most.
- Become the best learner possible:** We value expertise and creativity. We provide the supports and opportunities for students to pursue their passion and develop a love for learning.
- Become part of something bigger than themselves:** When students come to St. Johnsbury Academy Jeju, they become part of the most talented and diverse group of peers they may ever know. They develop an intellectual and emotional connection to making the community and the world a better place.

Home/School Communication

Home-school communication is extremely important to a child’s success at school. Communication happens in a variety of formats. These may include the Head of School’s update, the Elementary School parent updates, Parent Association information, school website, grade level and classroom websites, face to face conversations, home folders, and/or an assignment book/calendar, phone or email.



More formal efforts to communicate the educational program that we offer in the Elementary School at SJA Jeju are achieved through; Parent information evenings, workshops for parents held throughout the year, Parent-Student Handbook and Student-led conferences held three times a year.

Homework

Parents are encouraged to read daily with their children, both in English and in the child’s mother tongue. When parents model their own enjoyment and interest in books, children learn to value reading themselves. The process of listening to and discussing stories supports children in developing literacy skills.

Young children learn best from authentic, social experiences; therefore homework is not usually assigned for these young learners. Opportunities for play, independent exploration, and home responsibilities are encouraged beyond the school day.

Service Learning

Service Learning is a valued program, which makes curricular connections and helps the children identify genuine service needs in their community and the world. The Elementary School Service Learning program is aligned with SJA Jeju’s Mission statement: To encourage each individual to understand his or her relationships, rights, and responsibilities within a community that is itself part of the larger world. The students are involved in the preparation and action needed to provide a service. They also reflect on the project and demonstrate or share what they have learned to others. The Elementary School community actively supports school-wide community service and service learning programs throughout the year.

As Early Childhood students become more aware of service learning and what it means, the curriculum gives authentic opportunities for “teaching moments” that present themselves and together they will look for ways to help the students serve.

Visual Arts

The Early Childhood students will participate in various creative discoveries and explorations. Students will be engaged in self-directed creative making and play with materials. They will learn various techniques and tools (including its proper use and safety), while participating in making art inspired by themes/concepts taught in other subjects. Emphasis is on the process of creating, awareness of art within their surroundings and development of appreciation for the Arts.

Information Computer Technology (ICT)

The aim of the IT program is to:

Integrate and promote the use of technology to increase student learning

Develop a positive attitude towards technology and provide students with the concepts, knowledge, and skills to use technology effectively, responsibly and to build constructive competencies

SJA Jeju has adopted an integrated approach to IT. Under this model, IT and/or computer studies is no longer a standalone subject, but rather an infused element across the curriculum. As a result, the IT program is flexible. It is not tied to a weekly scheduled class. The IT department works with teachers, assistants and students to integrate technology, where appropriate, into the curriculum. Technology resources (desktops, laptops, iPads, cameras, etc.) are used to support learning objectives.

In line with the ISTE standards, our program encourages teachers and students to use technology authentically. That means stressing the use of technology:

As a tool to foster creativity & innovation

As a means to increase communication & collaboration

To gather, evaluate, and apply/use information (and show what has been learned)

As empathetically aware Digital Citizens

It is important to underscore that, while we encourage increased use of technology in authentic ways, we also ensure that technology is being used in an age appropriate and at a developmentally appropriate manner. In Early Childhood, technology use is scaled in accordance with student abilities and stages of development. iPads are used to promote student learning in several ways, including digital storytelling, e-reading, during rotations as a means to practice letter formation and literacy, mathematics and more. It is also used to collect observations in the form of pictures and video to be used as a record of class activities. Through teacher modeling and instruction, students also learn to be good digital citizens, using technology in a safe and appropriate manner to enrich their learning experience.

Library

In Library classes, students are introduced to library routines and the basic structure of the library. Goals for students of this age include developing a love of reading, finding and selecting books based on one’s own interest, showing appropriate library behaviors, understanding how to handle and care for books, and take the time to read together as well as one-on-one. Story time lessons may include reading picture books to help them develop a love of various characters or an author’s style, answering questions and making predictions and exploring new genres. Library classes are literacy-based and often connect to topics taught in the classroom.



Music

Students participate in an integration of performing, creating and expressing music. They will be exposed to elements of singing, chanting, playing games, dancing, movement, dramatization, and playing instruments. This allows for a 'hands-on' approach, based on the idea that children learn best by doing. Students play an active role in making the music and are involved in the process of creative expression. All students have opportunities to perform what they are learning.

Physical Education

Physical Education along with Health and Wellness facilitates the development of each individual to reach their fullest potential. Students are provided with the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values to enable them to be responsible in developing and maintaining their physical, mental, social and emotional well-being. Students are encouraged to contribute positively to the well being of others and to lead lifelong healthy active lifestyles.

