



2026-27 Curriculum Guide

Pre-K to 8

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1. Introduction

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Scholars, Servants, Leaders: The Curriculum of Wisdom, Service and Honor

Since 1905, Darlington's faculty and staff have continued the tradition of preparing the next generation to meet tomorrow's challenges.

Academic programs seek to be intellectually rigorous and demand the best of students at each level, while acknowledging and respecting students' differing abilities and learning preferences. We emphasize the pursuit of individual excellence in conjunction with the skills necessary for success in the future: collaboration, problem-solving, synthesis, conflict resolution, presentation skills, innovation, leadership, digital fluency, and global citizenship.

In the classroom, on the playing fields, in performance halls, and residence halls, we strive toward the first element of our mission statement: we empower students to learn with passion, a passion which can last a lifetime.

2. Pre-K to Fifth Grade

2.1. Pre-Kindergarten

Reading and Language Arts

Darlington's pre-K reading and language arts program provides:

- Rich language experiences through finger plays, songs, poems, and vocabulary
- Read Aloud literature, which provides book and print awareness
- Comprehension activities to build background knowledge and promote understanding of quality literature
- Authentic trade book literature selections
- Letter recognition and sounds
- Foundational reading skills that build on letter/sound recognition and span to beginning reading in a variety of ways
- Engaging child-centered activities in all parts of the lessons
- Developmentally appropriate writing activities, such as dictation and storytelling, fine motor skills
- Across the curriculum connections in each lesson promote learning in other curriculum areas
- Observational assessment for tracking children's progress
- Parental involvement component
- Darlington integrates all curriculum areas. Students will be fully immersed in a reading readiness program. Lessons will be taught with a story and centered around a theme. Darlington's teachers will provide a foundation for reading through small and large group instruction. Writing begins in pre-K and focuses on improving fine motor skills as well as creative writing skills.

Foundations by Wilson Language Training is the primary resource utilized for literacy instruction. Instruction is based on the following educational principles: explicit, systematic, interactive, and multisensory learning. Our phonetically based method of instruction includes:

- Phonemic awareness
- Print awareness
- Syllabication
- Rhyming
- Listening
- Alliteration
- Blending
- Segmentation

Our identified goals for student success are:

- Develop a love for books
- Excitement for learning
- Building and nurturing relationships
- Self-confidence with self-discipline
- Prepared for Kindergarten

Mathematics

The math curriculum empowers students to understand mathematical content by focusing on what they already know and are capable of doing mathematically. Students explore more of the mathematics spectrum by investigating data gathering and analysis, and patterns.

Highlights of this enriched curriculum include:

- Patterning
- Reproducing
- Measuring
- Graphing
- Numeral recognition
- Counting
- Numeral writing
- Matching
- Comparing
- Estimating
- Beginning addition and subtraction
- Calendar math skills- months of the year, days of the week, ordinal counting, place value, yesterday, today, tomorrow, etc.

Science and Social Studies

Science and social studies are integrated in all areas of the curriculum. The pre-kindergarten science program is designed to expand the child's experiences in the natural world. The subject matter is also integrated into the pre-K alphabet program as it relates to the letters studied. Science lessons rely heavily on hands-on experiences.

The pre-kindergarten social studies curriculum theme is "My Neighborhood." Students learn about their community and the relationship of their school to the larger world around them. Beginning map skills are introduced to help identify locations near and far. Lessons on citizenship and symbolism are related to

community events, from Veteran's Day recognitions to cheering for Darlington's student-athletes. Lastly, the history of Rome is embraced as the students discover the landmarks and symbols of their hometown.

2.2. Kindergarten

Literacy

Foundations by Wilson Language Training is the primary resource utilized for literacy instruction. Instruction is based on the following educational principles: explicit, systematic, interactive, and multisensory learning. The comprehensive literacy program in kindergarten is multifaceted. The program builds on previously learned skills and concepts and dives into more complex reading skills, such as word structure identification, syllable segmentation, and sentence building.

By the end of Kindergarten, students should be able to:

- recognize and produce rhyming words
- segment words in a spoken sentence
- segment words into syllables
- segment and pronounce initial, medial, and final phonemes in spoken CVC words
- manipulate phonemes with additions or substitutions in one-syllable words
- name all letters of the alphabet
- write all manuscript letters in lowercase and uppercase
- sequence letters of the alphabet
- fluently produce sounds of consonants (primary) and short vowels when given the letter
- fluently produce sounds for basic digraphs (wh, sh, ch, th, ck)
- name and write corresponding letter(s) when given sounds for consonants, consonant digraphs, and short vowels
- distinguish long and short vowel sounds within words
- spell other words phonetically, drawing on knowledge of sound-letter relationships
- identify and name correct punctuation at end of sentence
- Capitalize the first letter of words at the beginning of sentences
- name the author and illustrator of a story and define their roles
- explain narrative story structure including character, setting, and main events
- retell key details of narrative and informational text
- produce and expand complete sentences in shared language activities

Students work in journals throughout the year building writing skills as they record their thoughts and activities. As children become more competent in sounding out and writing words, they begin to build sentences.

Mathematics

Mathematics in kindergarten combines elements of skills-based instruction with the best traditional approaches. Through objects, drawings, conceptual language, and real-world examples, it helps students make sense of mathematics. Students are encouraged to share their methods orally and through written expression. *Math in Focus* is the primary resource used for mathematics instruction in grades Pre-K to 5. Instructional strategies center around the *CPA model*: Concrete to Pictorial to Abstract.

Instruction focuses on:

- Number recognition, whole numbers, and place value
- Counting by 1s and 10s
- Adding and subtracting 1-digit numbers, addition and subtraction facts within 10

- Developing concept readiness through hands-on activities and explorations
- Cooperative learning through partner and small-group activities
- Solving problems using multiple strategies
- Using mathematics in daily classroom routines
- Sorting, patterning, measuring, and classifying
- Problem-solving with everyday math situations
- Demonstrating place value
- Recognizing and building 2D and 3D shapes

Science and Social Studies

Science and social studies are integrated in all areas of the curriculum. The science curriculum includes seasons, phases of the moon, Earth and Moon orbiting, life cycles of animals, habitats, ecosystems and adaptations, conservation, pollution, static electricity, and various other interrelated topics which lend themselves well to the daily activities introduced during “teachable moments.” These topics are introduced through discussions, observations, and experimentation. Various field trips are also coordinated throughout the year to extend the learning that takes place in the classroom.

Kindergarten students explore social studies in the theme of "My Community." Learning to use directions to help identify our location for community helpers is a focus, as well as identifying traditions and responsibilities as a citizen of our community. Whole group projects as well as individual activities are used to enhance the study of these different aspects of social studies.

2.3. First Grade

Literacy

Reading begins with the fundamental mastery of the alphabetic principle. For the vast majority of learners, creating the neural pathway in the brain necessary for this mastery requires explicit, systematic phonics instruction. It does this by building strong phonics and decoding skills and integrating instruction in comprehension, vocabulary, and fluency, while also developing skills in writing, spelling, grammar, usage, and mechanics. It is a powerful and engaging combination of rigor and fun.

Foundations by Wilson Language Training is the primary resource utilized for literacy instruction. Instruction is based on the following educational principles: explicit, systematic, interactive, and multisensory learning. The comprehensive literacy program in first grade is multifaceted. The program builds on previously learned skills and concepts and dives into more complex reading skills, such as word structure identification, syllable segmentation, and sentence building. Using the multi-sensory approach, children are taught spelling patterns and rules of a sequence based on this approach. The literacy program teaches skills and strategies for developing decoding, visual memory of sight words, and comprehension through reading both controlled and noncontrolled text.

By the end of first grade, students should be able to:

- Segment syllables into sounds (phonemes)—up to 5 sounds
- Name sounds of primary consonants, consonant digraphs, and short and long vowels when given letters
- Name and write corresponding letter(s) when given sounds for consonants, consonant digraphs, and short and long vowels
- Print all uppercase and lowercase letters
- Distinguish long and short vowel sounds

- Name sounds for r-controlled vowels
- Name sounds for vowel digraphs and vowel diphthongs
- Use conventional spelling for words with common spelling patterns and for frequently occurring irregular words
- Spell untaught words phonetically, drawing on phonemic awareness and spelling conventions
- Read and spell the first 100 high frequency words, including irregular words (Trick Words)
- Identify word structures such as blends, digraphs, base words, suffixes, syllable types (closed and vowel-consonant-e syllables)
- Read and spell CVC, CCVC, CVCC, CCVCC, CVCe words
- Read and spell compound words and other words with two syllables by breaking them into syllables
- Read and spell words with -s, -es, -ed, -ing suffixes when added to non-changing base words
- Apply correct punctuation (period, question mark, exclamation point)
- Apply capitalization rules for beginning of sentences and names of people, places, and dates.
- Explain major differences between fictional stories and informational text
- Explain narrative story structure including characters, settings, and main events
- Retell key details of a fictional story and demonstrate understanding
- Use illustrations and/or details in a story to describe its characters, settings, and events
- Ask and answer questions about key details in a text
- Ask and answer questions to help determine or clarify the meaning of words and phrases in a text
- Identify specific words in a story that tell or suggest details
- Identify who is telling the story at various points in a text
- Identify the main topic and retell key details of informational text
- Identify and explain new meanings for familiar words and newly taught words
- Produce and expand complete simple and compound declarative, interrogative, imperative, and exclamatory sentences in response to prompts
- Construct complete sentences using vocabulary words
- Use sentence-level context as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase
- Identify frequently occurring root words (e.g., look) and their inflectional forms (e.g., looks, looked, looking)
- Sort words into categories to gain a sense of the concept the category represents
- Define words by category and by one or more key attributes
- Apply beginning dictionary skills
- Identify real-life connections between words and their use
- Use verbs to convey a sense of past, present, and future
- Read controlled stories with fluency, expression, and understanding

Cursive handwriting is taught in first grade. Why cursive?

- It is easier to write fluently.
- Fosters greater motor memory
- Letters can be taught in families
- Easier for students with spatial difficulties
- Tends to be more kinesthetic
- Less reversals
- Will foster improved written expression
- Less starts and stops

Mathematics

Mathematics in first grade combines elements of skills-based instruction with the best traditional approaches. Through objects, drawings, conceptual language, and real-world examples, it helps students make sense of mathematics. Students are encouraged to share their methods orally and through written expression. *Math in Focus* is the primary resource used for mathematics instruction in grades Pre-K to 5. Instructional strategies center around the *CPA model*: Concrete to Pictorial to Abstract.

Instruction focuses on:

- Using numbers in everyday life
- Recognizing visual patterns and number patterns
- Naming and constructing geometric shapes
- Working toward mastery of addition and subtraction facts to 20
- Developing skills in 2-digit addition and subtraction
- Introducing fractions and parts of a whole
- Learning to tell time to the hour, half-hour, and 5-minute intervals
- Knowing the value of and counting sums of money
- Measuring in both the standard and metric systems
- Understanding place value to the hundreds place
- Developing mental math strategies
- Graphing

Science and Social Studies

First-grade science is designed to make students more aware of why and how things work as they do. Students study the life cycle of plants, light and sound, magnets and forces, and conduct several investigations throughout the year. A unit on dinosaurs and fossils will connect oceans, landforms, and rocks and minerals. Children will begin to learn the concept of conducting a "fair" experiment. Animal study is greatly enhanced with several visits by the director of our local environmental education center. Opportunities to partner with the Upper School science department, such as the Insect Expo, the MakerSpace, and the Dar Farm, are utilized to enhance the student experience. Science in the world around us is emphasized throughout the year.

"My Place in the World" inspires the explorations in first grade. Students use their knowledge of Rome as background to compare neighboring cities and then expand to state and regional information. A transportation unit serves as a springboard to thematic studies of continents. First grade focuses on the customs, traditions, people, food, climate, and animals of Antarctica, Asia, and Africa.

2.4. Second Grade

Literacy

Foundations by Wilson Language Training is the primary resource utilized for literacy instruction. Instruction is based on the following educational principles: explicit, systematic, interactive, and multisensory learning. The comprehensive literacy program in second grade is multifaceted. The program builds on previously learned skills and concepts and dives into more complex reading skills. Using a multi-sensory approach, children are taught spelling patterns and rules of sequence. The literacy program teaches skills and strategies for developing decoding, visual memory of sight words, and comprehension through reading both controlled and noncontrolled text. Through guided reading lessons and opportunities to practice reading independently, second graders learn comprehension strategies for both fiction and non-fiction text.

Second-graders write frequently, using class readings as a guide for most writing activities. Students learn to write through mini-lessons and many opportunities to revise and edit with peers and teachers. The students learn to use a story map to understand that good expository writing contains a beginning, middle, and end. They also learn that generating ideas, drafting, revising, sharing, and publishing are all components of the writing process. Students write interactively from stories they are reading or experiencing in their daily lives.

By the end of second grade, students should be able to:

- Know and apply grade-level phonics and word-analysis skills in decoding words
- Segment syllables into sounds (phonemes)—up to six sounds
- Identify word structures such as vowels, consonants, blends, digraphs, and digraph blends
- Identify parts of words (syllables, base words, suffixes)
- Identify all six syllable types: closed, vowel-consonant-e, open, r-controlled, vowel digraph/diphthong, and consonant-le
- Distinguish long and short vowels when reading regularly spelled one-syllable words.
- Read and spell words with short vowels.
- Read and spell words with long vowels in vowel-consonant-e and open syllables.
- Read and spell words with r-controlled vowels (ar, er, ir, or, ur)
- Read and spell words with vowel teams (ai, ay, ee, ey, ea, oi, oy, oa, ow, oe, ou, oo, ue, ew, au, aw)
- Read and spell words with unexpected vowel sounds (old, ild, ind, ost, olt, ive)
- Read and spell words with suffixes (-s, -es, -ed, -ing, -est, -ish, -able, -ive, -y, -ful, -ment, -less, -ness, -ly, -ty)
- Read and spell words with common prefixes (un-, dis-, mis-, non-, trans-, pre-, pro-, re-, de-)
- Read and spell regular one-, two- and three-syllable words
- Identify words with inconsistent but common spelling-sound correspondences
- Read and spell the first 200 high frequency words including irregular words
- Divide multisyllabic words
- Produce complete sentences when appropriate to task and situation to provide requested detail or clarification.
- Use synonyms
- Know some multiple-meaning words
- Apply dictionary skills
- Use correct writing position and pencil grip
- Write clear, legible manuscript at an appropriate rate
- Spell words with options for the grapheme representation for sounds with use of a spell checker or dictionary
- Apply correct punctuation (period, question mark, exclamation point)
- Apply capitalization rules for beginning of sentences and names of people
- Read controlled stories with fluency, expression, and understanding
- Read approximately 90 words per minute with fluency and understanding
- Retell short narrative stories, recounting key ideas and details
- Retell facts from informational text
- Locate facts and details in narrative and informational writing
- Skim for information
- Make judgments and predictions from given facts
- Use sentence-level context as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase
- Determine the meaning of a new word when a prefix is added to a known word
- Use the meaning of individual words to predict the meaning of a compound word
- Identify real-life connections between words and their uses

- Answer who, what, where, when, why, and how questions with narrative and informational text
- Describe how characters in a story respond to major events and challenges
- Determine the central message of a story
- Identify the main topic/purpose of an informational text as well as the focus of specific paragraphs.

Use words and phrases acquired through conversations, reading, being read to, and responding to texts, including using descriptive adjectives and adverbs.

Mathematics

Mathematics in first grade combines elements of skills-based instruction with the best traditional approaches. Through objects, drawings, conceptual language, and real-world examples, it helps students make sense of mathematics. Students are encouraged to share their methods orally and through written expression. *Math in Focus* is the primary resource used for mathematics instruction in grades Pre-K to 5. Instructional strategies center around the *CPA model*: Concrete to Pictorial to Abstract.

Instruction focuses on:

- Developing mastery of addition and subtraction problems and using them in problem-solving settings
- Developing mental arithmetic skills using addition and subtraction
- Writing and solving number stories
- Developing classification skills using 2- and 3-dimensional shapes
- Exploring patterns in number
- Exploring fractions of regions and collections of objects and relations among fractions (equal to, less than, and greater than)
- Measuring in both the standard and metric systems, using appropriate measuring tools
- Extending work with money and fractions into decimal notation for dollar and cents amounts
- Developing place value concepts into the thousands
- Learning to tell time to the five-minute interval on both digital and analog clocks and exploring the concept of elapsed time

Social Studies

In second grade social studies, students build foundational geography skills by learning the differences between globes and maps and practicing essential map skills such as using a compass rose, reading a legend, and identifying continents and oceans. They explore the countries of North America and compare the customs and traditions of people in the United States, Canada, and Mexico. Students broaden their understanding of global cultures by learning about the customs of countries in Europe, South America, Australia, and New Zealand. The curriculum also includes a focus on immigration and the idea of "coming to America," helping students understand the diverse backgrounds that shape the United States. Throughout the year, students study holidays celebrated in various countries and cultures, making connections between traditions, beliefs, and community celebrations around the world.

Science

In second grade science, students explore a variety of engaging topics that build curiosity and foundational understanding of the world around them. They study the human body, learning about major organs and how body systems work together to keep us healthy. In the solar system unit, students discover the sun, moon, planets, and their movements. Weather and the water cycle are explored through observations, data collection, and hands-on investigations that help students understand patterns and changes in the environment. Students also examine life cycles of plants and animals and investigate how different habitats support the survival of living things. The properties of matter are introduced through experiments that explore solids, liquids, and

gases, and students learn how matter can change states. Finally, students explore simple machines such as levers, pulleys, and inclined planes, gaining insight into how they help make work easier in everyday life.

2.5. Third Grade

Literacy

Our third-grade reading approach is based on the Science of Reading, which incorporates language comprehension and word recognition in reading instruction and encompasses reading, writing, grammar, morphology, and spelling. *Amplify Core Knowledge Language Arts* is the primary resource used for literacy instruction. Third grade is a time when students transition from learning to read toward reading to learn. The purpose of our reading instruction is to foster a love for books and independence among readers. Important comprehension strategies are taught that all readers must be able to apply to text to read and understand content. Explicit instruction in comprehension strategies and skills is provided utilizing a variety of fiction and nonfiction texts. Students have opportunities to practice each skill and strategy in a variety of activities, with teacher guidance, with peers, and independently. The importance of student engagement is emphasized, as is the interaction between students and text. Seven important comprehension strategies are taught that all readers must be able to apply to text to read and understand content.

These strategies are:

- Making connections
- Creating mental images
- Making inferences/drawing conclusions
- Asking questions
- Determining what is important
- Synthesizing
- Monitoring reading comprehension

The third-grade writing curriculum runs parallel with the reading instruction and social studies and science content. We utilize the steps of the writing process: prewriting, drafting, revising, and editing. Each student's "masterpieces" are products of understanding and practicing each step of the writing process. Writing activities include journals, personal narratives, informational paragraphs, letters, opinion pieces, and a research report for the Wax Museum. Writing mechanics are also emphasized in third grade, as students are evaluated on punctuation, subject-verb agreement, capitalization, correct word order, and the correct use of words in addition to content.

Mathematics

The Math guides our math instruction in *Focus* series. It combines elements of standards-based instruction with the best traditional approaches. A student-centered, problem-based approach helps students develop confidence and a deeper understanding of math. Students will participate in mathematical activities that use concrete manipulatives, pictorial representations, and abstract sequences of instruction to promote understanding and achievement. Daily word problems are incorporated to improve problem-solving and mental math skills, and students are encouraged to share their strategies for solving real-world math problems.

Instruction focuses on:

- Developing place value concepts through the ten-thousandths place
- Understanding and using money
- Telling time using analog and digital clocks

- Solving critical thinking word problems utilizing the four mathematical operations (addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division)
- Mastering multiplication tables through 12s
- Applying number sense to recognize reasonable answers and to detect errors
- Understanding and relating partial whole numbers through unit fractions and introducing decimals as they relate to money and place value
- Measuring in both the standard and metric systems
- Naming both flat shapes and three-dimensional geometric figures
- Calculating area and perimeter
- Organizing data using line plots, bar graphs, pictographs, line graphs, frequency, and tally tables
- Utilizing mental math strategies in conjunction with the four mathematical operations

Social Studies

In third grade Social Studies, students explore the rich and diverse history and geography of the United States. The year begins with a study of the early explorations of North America, where students learn about the motivations, challenges, and lasting impacts of key explorers. They then examine life in Colonial America, comparing regional differences and gaining an understanding of how early settlements shaped our nation's foundation. As the year progresses, students investigate the period of Western Expansion, learning about pioneers, the concept of Manifest Destiny, and the effects of expansion on Native American communities. Throughout the course, students also study the five regions of the United States, identifying geographical features, cultural characteristics, and economic activities unique to each. These units help students build a strong sense of historical perspective and geographic awareness, encouraging critical thinking and curiosity about the country's development.

Science

Darlington's science program strives to build strong foundations in scientific methodology and science content. Throughout grades three through five, components of Earth, life, and physical science are taught, with each grade having a concentration in two of these areas. Lab skills, lab safety, and the scientific method are taught in each grade level to promote safe and correct laboratory practices. Technology is integrated into the curriculum in a variety of ways.

In third grade science, students explore the natural world through hands-on investigations and engaging lessons that build foundational knowledge and curiosity. The year begins with the study of plants, where students learn about their life cycles, parts, and functions. They then explore animal classifications, identifying characteristics that distinguish mammals, reptiles, birds, amphibians, fish, and insects. Students also study human body systems and the five senses, gaining a deeper understanding of how their bodies work. As the year progresses, students examine the properties of light and sound through experiments and observation. The curriculum concludes with an introduction to the solar system, where students learn about the planets, the moon, and the sun, and develop a broader understanding of Earth's place in space.

2.6. Fourth Grade

Literacy

Our fourth-grade reading approach is based on the Science of Reading, which incorporates language comprehension and word recognition in reading instruction and encompasses reading, writing, grammar, morphology, and spelling. *Amplify Core Knowledge Language Arts* is the primary resource used for literacy instruction in whole-group and small-group lessons. Students are exposed to and instructed through a wide variety of book genres. This is accomplished through partner in-class readings, independent reading, and novel studies. Self-selected and teacher-selected novels, short stories, poems, and non-fiction texts are used

throughout the course to provide an engaging plethora of literary types. Students are taught fundamental fiction and non-fiction reading and writing strategies through analysis of literature and the writing techniques used by the author (s). Class projects and integrated studies from other courses are woven into reading skills and strategies instruction. Comprehension is assessed both formally and informally through reading response journals, writing prompts, short-answer critical thinking assessments, and independent conferences with the teacher. The primary focus of the reading curriculum is to foster a passion for reading and a love of books.

Vocabulary instruction in reading class comes from mini-lessons centered around root and base words and our class-read aloud. The students also collect new words when reading independently. This provides strategic vocabulary instruction through Greek and Latin roots. Skills addressed are word origins and etymologies, synonyms and antonyms, word usage, word forms, critical thinking, multiple meanings, and parts of speech.

Fourth-graders are involved in writing activities almost daily. Following the writing process of generating ideas, drafting, revising, sharing, and publishing, students write personal narratives, creative stories, poetry, research reports, persuasive paragraphs, descriptive paragraphs, letters, compare/contrast essays, journals, and short stories. Students learn how to organize their ideas by outlining and working with different types of graphic organizers and webs, which enable them to keep their writing focused. Editing skills are practiced weekly.

Students also learn to use the Internet effectively for research projects. Speaking and listening skills are also incorporated in the students' presentation of book reports, recitation of poetry, and demonstrations of projects. Teachers evaluate written work using rubrics, a standard assessment guide.

Mathematics

Fourth-grade math is taught through a series of skills that continue to build from third grade and prepare students for fifth grade. Math is taught using the *Math in Focus* - Singapore Math resource.

- Place and value through the millions place
- Rounding numbers through the millions place
- Addition and subtraction
- Multiplication
- Division
- Multi-step word problems
- Prime vs. composite
- Finding factors
- Unit fractions
- Equivalent fractions
- Comparing fractions
- Reducing fractions
- Multiplying whole numbers and fractions
- Fractions to decimals
- Data analysis and statistics
- Four operations with decimals
- Line properties
- Shape identification
- Angle measurement
- Area and perimeter of rectangles and composite figures

Math will focus on taking a concept from a concrete aspect that students can relate to, through pictorial representations of the concept, into abstract thinking of the mathematical concept. This allows students to relate abstract math problems to real situations they may encounter. By doing this, students can grow a

general understanding of deductive reasoning and allow for mental math strategies to be developed. This will allow students to gain critical thinking skills in mathematics, thus driving success in logical reasoning.

Social Studies

“Georgia on My Mind” is the inspiring theme for fourth grade as students embark on an in-depth exploration of our great state. Building on their map skills, students deepen their understanding of Georgia’s geography, from its diverse regions and major cities to its natural landmarks and waterways. In their study of Georgia history, fourth-graders journey through time, learning about the rich cultures of Native American tribes such as the Cherokee, Creek, and Yamacraw. They explore the arrival of European explorers and the establishment of early settlements, including Savannah, the state’s first colonial capital. Students trace the development of Georgia’s various capitals, gaining insight into the political and social changes that shaped the state. Additionally, students examine how Georgia’s economy evolved from agriculture and cotton plantations to the growth of industry, transportation, and technology. This comprehensive study fosters a deep appreciation for Georgia’s unique heritage, people, and contributions to the nation.

Science

In fourth-grade science, students explore foundational concepts across Earth, Life, and Physical Sciences. In Earth Science, they study weather systems and learn to identify patterns and causes of different weather phenomena, while investigating the phases of the moon and the unique characteristics of Mars within our solar system. Life Science lessons focus on habitats and ecosystems, emphasizing how animals adapt to survive in their environments. Students also dive into the microscopic world by examining cells and microorganisms while understanding their roles in living organisms. In Physical Science, the curriculum introduces various forms of energy, with a particular focus on kinetic energy and its effects. Additionally, students study the six types of simple machines: lever, wheel and axle, pulley, inclined plane, wedge, and screw while exploring how these machines make work easier in everyday life. Together, these topics build a broad and engaging science foundation that encourages inquiry and hands-on learning.

2.7. Fifth Grade

Literacy

Our fifth-grade reading approach is based on the Science of Reading, which incorporates language comprehension and word recognition in reading instruction and encompasses reading, writing, grammar, morphology, and spelling. *Amplify Core Knowledge Language Arts* is the primary resource used for literacy instruction in whole-group and small-group lessons. Students are exposed to and instructed through a wide variety of book genres. This is accomplished through in-class readings, independent reading, and novel studies. Self-selected and teacher-selected novels, short stories, poems, and non-fiction texts are used throughout the course to provide an engaging plethora of literary types. Students are taught fundamental fiction and non-fiction reading and writing strategies through analysis of literature and writing techniques used by the author (s). Class projects and integrated studies from other courses are woven into reading skills and strategies instruction. Comprehension is assessed both formally and informally through daily writing prompts, short-answer critical thinking assessments, and independent conferences with the teacher. The primary focus of the reading curriculum is to foster a passion for reading and a love of books.

Vocabulary instruction in reading class comes from mini-lessons centered around root and base words. This provides strategic vocabulary instruction through Greek and Latin roots. Skills addressed are word origins and etymologies, synonyms and antonyms, word usage, word forms, critical thinking, multiple meanings, and parts of speech.

Fifth-graders are involved in writing activities almost daily. Following the writing process of generating ideas, drafting, revising, sharing, and publishing, students write creative stories, poetry, research reports, persuasive paragraphs, descriptive paragraphs, compare/contrast essays, and journals. Students learn how to organize their ideas by working with different types of graphic organizers and webs, which enable them to keep their writing focused. Editing skills are practiced weekly.

Students also learn to use the Internet effectively for research projects. Speaking and listening skills are also incorporated in the students' presentation of book reports, recitation of poetry, and demonstrations of projects. Teachers evaluate written work using rubrics, a standard assessment guide.

Mathematics

Fifth-grade math is taught using the *Math in Focus* - Singapore Math resource. Through objects, drawings, conceptual language, and real-world examples, students make sense of mathematics through guided instruction. Regular "math talks" are used to encourage students to share their methods orally using math vocabulary. This approach allows the students to learn and practice math skills using the teacher's models as examples for reference. Math IXL is used to enhance skill extensions and critical thinking.

Math instruction focuses on the skills listed below:

- **Number Operations and Algebraic Thinking**
 - Exhibits solid application of multiplication/division facts
 - Understands order of operations
 - Effectively applies all four math operations
 - Solves for unknown variables in equations using the four operators
 - Finds greatest common factor/least common multiple from given numbers
 - Identifies prime and composite numbers
 - Solves multi-step word problems using all four math operations
 - Recognizes and extends number patterns including negative numbers
- **Fractions, Decimals, Percentages, and Ratios**
 - Compares and orders unit fractions
 - Finds equivalent fractions
 - Understands mixed numbers and improper fractions
 - Simplifies fractions when needed
 - Applies all four operations using fractions
 - Converts a fraction to a decimal
 - Understands decimal place value to ten thousandths
 - Locates and compares decimals using a number line
 - Applies all four operations using decimals
 - Understands and uses percent
 - Uses ratios to compare quantities
- **Measurement, Geometry, and Data**
 - Converts metric units of measurement
 - Understands and determines volume of solid figures and rectangular prisms
 - Interprets and constructs charts, tables, and graphs to represent data
 - Understands and can use a coordinate grid using all four quadrants
 - Identifies and classifies triangles
 - Classifies polygons and their hierarchy

Social Studies

In the fifth-grade social studies unit titled "A New Nation," students will embark on an in-depth exploration of Early America, tracing the country's development from the Age of Exploration through the American Revolution and the founding of the United States. A strong emphasis will be placed on map skills, as students analyze how geography influenced exploration, colonization, and the expansion of the young nation.

Students will investigate key topics including European colonization, the cultural and economic impact of early settlements, and the growing tensions that led to the American Revolution. They will examine the causes and major events of the Revolution, gaining a clear understanding of how the colonies united to declare independence. The Declaration of Independence will be studied closely to understand its historical significance and foundational role in American democracy.

Finally, students will explore the challenges faced in forming a new nation, including the creation of government structures and the principles that guided the drafting of foundational documents. Through a combination of critical thinking, primary source analysis, and interactive projects, students will develop a comprehensive understanding of Early America and the birth of the United States.

Science

Darlington's science program is dedicated to fostering a deep understanding of the scientific method alongside comprehensive science content, empowering students to become curious, analytical thinkers.

In fifth grade, students engage with a variety of exciting topics, including the classification of living organisms, space exploration, marine ecosystems of the oceans, human body systems, properties of matter, and the fundamentals of electricity. These units are designed to spark curiosity while building essential knowledge and critical thinking skills.

A highlight of the fifth-grade experience is an immersive field trip to Skidaway Island, located along the Georgia coast. This hands-on excursion provides students with a unique opportunity to study coastal ecosystems, observe wildlife habitats firsthand, and deepen their understanding of environmental science in a real-world setting.

Students also complete a science fair project where they apply the scientific method and learn how to formulate a hypothesis, conduct experiments, collect data, and present their findings. This project focuses on skills in inquiry, problem-solving, and scientific communication.

2.8. Spanish

Spanish (Pre-K to 2)

Spanish instruction begins in pre-kindergarten. The students are introduced to the Spanish language through project-based learning. Introducing a new language and culture in a meaningful way promotes understanding of all types of people.

The students learn key vocabulary by using interpretive listening skills through videos and songs. The students then apply the vocabulary through presentational writing and creating art. By learning vocabulary through auditory and visual processing skills, the students are given opportunities to use interpersonal communication and presentational speaking skills. Students act out vocabulary in skits and participate in games that reinforce the vocabulary. The vocabulary that the pre-K through second-grade students learn gives them the comprehension skills they need while integrating Spanish culture and customs.

Spanish (3-5)

The third- through fifth-grade Spanish curriculum is proficiency-oriented, which means that there is a greater focus on meaningful communication than on grammatical structure. We will study pronunciation, vocabulary,

grammar, conversational techniques, and culture. Our goals are to enhance the development of reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills in both English and Spanish; to develop higher-order cognitive skills; to support academic content area instruction; to promote global awareness and cross-cultural understanding; to develop increased functional proficiency in all aspects of the language with each year of study; and to meet national foreign language standards.

Each student has access to their own iPad, so we employ a great deal of technology in the Spanish classroom. We also use songs, interactive games, and authentic resources to promote an active and engaging learning environment further.

2.9. Teaching and Learning Center

Mission

At Darlington's Teaching and Learning Center, we believe in knowing each student – their strengths, interests, motivation, passions, learning variabilities, and challenges. When we understand how students learn best, we can provide the right support at the right level, from universal classroom instruction to targeted help to intensive intervention when needed.

Unlike schools that treat learning support as separate, our TLC operates as an integrated system within Darlington School that recognizes learning differences and removes barriers. Our Teaching and Learning Center is a bridge connecting students, teachers, and families through open communication and a strengths-based approach focused on data-driven decision-making, accelerated learning, individualized goal-setting, and growth.

We believe that students can thrive when they have protected time for focused learning, guidance from learning specialists, and personalized accommodations that level the playing field and make learning and optimal achievement possible. Our programming emphasizes early literacy remediation and intervention to help students develop the ability to read to learn with joy and agency, while teaching essential study skills and executive functions like time management, self-regulation, and metacognition. We facilitate learning strategies instruction that supports students in developing communication, self-advocacy, engagement, goal-setting, and growth mindset skills. Our ultimate goal is to empower our students to become confident contributors at Darlington and beyond.

Beyond working directly with students, the TLC provides educational leadership throughout the school by promoting brain-based research, differentiated instruction, and universal design for learning by facilitating strong connections between curriculum, instruction, and assessment that optimize teaching and learning outcomes schoolwide.

Overview of Services

Parents play a key role as partners with the Teaching and Learning Center. When parents observe learning differences, academic struggles, or want better to understand their child's unique learning needs and potential, they can seek a psychoeducational evaluation with a licensed private psychologist. These evaluations, when shared with the school, serve as the foundation for Teaching and Learning Center services. The recommendations in evaluations provide insights into students' cognitive and academic profiles—including their strengths, backgrounds, motivations, passions, and learning challenges—which the TLC then uses to create a roadmap for appropriate support.

What a psychoeducational evaluation may reveal is that, beyond the universal instruction provided by classroom teachers, students may also benefit from targeted and/or intensive support designed to optimize their learning. When additional support is needed, these services are implemented within Darlington School's

existing curriculum and instruction structures and the Teaching and Learning Center's available resources. The TLC serves students whose learning needs can be effectively supported within these existing programs and resources. The ultimate goal is for each student to be seen and understood, with support seamlessly integrated into their Darlington experience, enabling and empowering them to thrive.

After reviewing a student's psychoeducational evaluation, the Teaching and Learning Center meets with parents to discuss their child's learning profile and explain how TLC services integrate into their academic journey at Darlington. The TLC then recommends an appropriate service pathway and creates an individualized Student Support Plan that includes the student's learning profile, school accommodations, learning strategies, measurable goals, and assessment data. These plans are updated regularly to reflect student progress and changing needs.

For students without a psychoeducational evaluation, the Teaching and Learning Center offers its Discovery Service. This short-term collaborative process includes developing a growing partnership between the school, teachers, and families initiated and led by the Student Support Team (SST) whereby learning challenges and variability are identified. The SST is comprised of the Division Director, Assistant Division Director, Directors of the Teaching and Learning Center, Director of Curriculum and Instruction, and the school counselor. Through systematic observation and assessment, the SST identifies learning patterns, analyzes student capabilities, and can direct the implementation of targeted intervention strategies over a short period of time.

During the discovery service, external referrals to speech-language pathologists, occupational therapists, psychologists, or private academic tutors may be recommended. The SST may also recommend a psychoeducational evaluation to help inform next steps in a student's academic journey.

Pre-K to 5 Services

Direct Service (The Accelerated Learning Program): Students with a diagnosed language-based learning difference, such as dyslexia, may qualify for the Accelerated Learning Program (ALP), a specialized fee-based program within the Teaching and Learning Center. Darlington is the only school in Northwest Georgia offering a program specifically designed to support students with dyslexia.

Students enrolled in the Accelerated Learning Program receive daily small-group and individualized literacy instruction from an Orton-Gillingham-trained learning specialist. This structured literacy remediation is integrated into the regular school day, allowing students to participate fully in Darlington's comprehensive academic and exploratory programs without missing mathematics, science, social studies, athletics, arts, engineering, or technology. Learning specialists combine grade-level content with the Orton-Gillingham approach, enabling students to develop literacy skills while engaging with age-appropriate curriculum. Learning Specialists create Student Support Plans that address the student's complete learning profile and consult closely with classroom teachers to implement accommodations that benefit students across multiple classroom settings.

Consult Service: The hallmark of this service level is a collaborative team approach to student support. While classroom teachers in Pre-K-5 are the primary facilitators of the students' day-to-day learning experiences and instruction, Learning Specialists serve as strategic advisors, working closely with teachers to help them implement evidence-based strategies and accommodations.

To do so, Learning Specialists create individualized Student Support Plans based on psychoeducational evaluations and meet weekly with classroom teachers at each grade level to review progress and refine approaches. They participate in parent conferences and continuously document growth and evolving needs within a student's plan. Additional support includes flexible, targeted support, review, or practice sessions for math, literacy, and executive functioning skills, available on an as-needed basis. Learning Specialists can also

coordinate after-school skill-based private academic tutoring or homework assistance (after 3:30 PM) when appropriate.

Pre-K-5 Discovery Service: The foundational literacy and math skills acquired during lower school years are critical to academic success, which is why Discovery Services are most commonly implemented at the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd-grade levels when students are developing these essential abilities. Learning variability frequently manifests during these early years, making identification and intervention paramount to student success. With this in mind, the Teaching and Learning Center offers the Discovery Service—a short-term collaborative process led by the Student Support Team (SST) to identify learning challenges and implement targeted interventions. Facilitating partnership between the SST, teachers, and families is a hallmark of our discovery service. The SST includes Division Directors, TLC Directors, and school counselors who conduct systematic observation and assessment to understand learning patterns and capabilities. This service may include a DarBoost, a short-term intensive intervention period with a learning specialist to discover specific learning needs and ascertain responses to interventions and support. Following the discovery service period, the SST may recommend external referrals to specialists or suggest a psychoeducational evaluation to guide next steps in the student's academic journey.

If you are interested in learning more about Pre-K-5 Direct, Consult, or Discovery Services, please contact [Jessica Laliberte](#), the Director of the Teaching and Learning Center.

2.10. Fine Arts

All students in Pre-K to 5 take Fine Arts classes during the 8-day rotation.

2.10.1. Performing Arts

At Darlington, music is an integral part of the total curriculum. The foremost objective of the music department is to instill in each child a lifelong love and appreciation for music and all that it encompasses. Classroom objectives are based on the developmental nature of the learner and include:

- Creating
- Improvising, arranging, and composing music
- Performing
- Singing and playing a varied repertoire of music alone and with others for rehearsal and performance
- Reading and notating music
- Responding
- Listening and analyzing music and performances
- Connecting
- Connecting music to other fine arts and disciplines
- Connecting music to history and culture

Students receive music instruction each week in pre-K to 5. At the fourth-grade level, students may continue in General Music or choose to join the Strings or Band program.

General Music

General music instruction is provided for grades pre-K to 5 and builds on the basics in music using movement, classroom instruments, singing, and listening. Methods and resources are numerous and include Orff and Kodaly techniques.

Each class in pre-K to 2 presents a play or musical during the school year. These performances provide an opportunity for each student to be “on stage” in front of the student body at least once a year and showcase student knowledge, skill, and growth in self-confidence.

Strings

String instruction in fourth and fifth grades provides opportunity for students to learn to play the violin, viola, cello, or string bass. Each grade level is taught together using the Essentials Method and other resources to develop music reading skills and string technique. Beginners can join at any grade level and are given the opportunity for private instruction if needed. The string classes perform at least three times during the school year.

Band

Band instruction in fourth and fifth grades provides an introduction to wind and percussion instruments with continued development in music reading ability and technique. Each grade level is taught together and performs for at least three school programs during the school year. This class also provides the necessary foundation for participating in the 6-8 Band.

Chorus

Students in grades four and five participate in the beginning choral ensemble. This group meets every eight days to reinforce music theory and sight reading, as well as musicianship, in a true choral setting. This encourages students to continue vocal study and prepares them for opportunities in grades 6-8 and beyond. This group performs at various school and community events throughout the year.

2.10.2. Visual Arts

At Darlington, visual art is an integral part of the total curriculum. The foremost objective of the visual art department is to instill in each child a lifelong love and appreciation for art and all that it encompasses. Classroom objectives for all visual art classes are based on the developmental nature of the learner and include:

Creating

- Understanding and applying media, techniques, and processes
- Using knowledge of structures and functions to create unique works of art
- Choosing and evaluating a range of subject matter, symbols, and ideas

Presenting

- Participating in art exhibits on campus and in the community.
- Discussing personal works of art and the artwork of others to enhance visual literacy

Responding

- Reflecting upon and assessing the characteristics and merits of their work and the work of others

Connecting

- Making connections between visual arts and other disciplines
- Understanding the visual arts in relation to history and cultures

The art teacher presents an age-appropriate curriculum that builds confidence, develops skills, and creates an art appreciation. Students are taught within a sequential program that is adapted to support each individual's developmental skills. Working in a variety of different mediums, they explore and create different forms of art while focusing on the application of the elements and principles of design.

2.11. Library

The mission of the Darlington School Library is to empower students to be enthusiastic lifelong readers, critical thinkers, and skillful researchers.

The Joanne G. Yancey Library, which serves all students in grades Pre-K to 8, contains over 13,000 books and over 3,000 eBooks. Students are provided access to many digital subscription resources, including Galileo, Gale, and PebbleGo.

Students may visit any time during the school day, with permission from their teacher, as well as their regular scheduled class time. As a vibrant hub of the school, the space is also used for Makerspace activities, parent meetings, faculty meetings, and is a popular hangout for middle grades students during break.

The library also collaborates with Pre-K through 8 teachers to integrate reading, information literacy, and research skills into all areas of the curriculum. Some of the broad topics in the library's curricular scope are reading with purpose for information and pleasure, the research process, ethical responsibilities of scholars and digital citizens, and presentation and application of information.

In addition to instruction, the library hosts programs like summer reading, the late-night library, Iditaread, and new themed reading contests every year. The librarians are actively connected to the school community by being middle grades advisors, coaches, and club sponsors.

2.12. Physical Education

In physical education, pre-K to 5 students acquire the knowledge and skills for movement that provide the foundation for enjoyment, continued social development through physical activity, and appreciation for lifetime fitness. Pre-K to 5 students learn fundamental movement skills and develop gross and fine motor skills. Students learn rules and procedures for simple games and apply safety practices associated with physical activities.

In each activity, pre-K to second-grade students engage in developing basic levels of strength, endurance, and flexibility. In addition, they learn space awareness and to accept and appreciate personal differences. Students in grades 3-5 work on combining the manipulative skills and basic concepts taught into more advanced and dynamic activities. These activities and games focus on success and learning for all students, rather than just winning. Students continue to learn etiquette of participation and skills to resolve conflicts during games and sports in acceptable ways.

The philosophy behind a strong elementary physical education program is to teach students lifelong fitness skills that they can apply to their daily lives. The pre-K to 5 physical education programs will also develop self-confidence and positive self-esteem through successful physical activity. Students are taught through competitive team activities to demonstrate cooperation, good sportsmanship, and safety.

3. Grades 6 to 8

3.1. Academic Affairs

Our curriculum is committed to educating the whole child. We aspire to goals such as academic excellence, athletic and other extracurricular participation, personal integrity, respect for oneself and others, social responsibility, and servant leadership.

While all courses are above grade level, some courses are designed for those students who are more academically advanced. Recommendations for these courses are based on teacher recommendations and student readiness, as reflected in his or her performance.

Students in sixth grade will be placed in classes based on their performance and teacher recommendation.

Eighth-grade students will be placed in ninth-grade courses based on their performance and teacher recommendation. To be considered for Honors courses, Upper School guidelines will be followed.

Grading System

Darlington's grading system is numerical. Letter grade equivalents and grade points are in the chart on this page.

Honor Rolls

Darlington has a two-tier Honor Roll, based upon a student's numerical average:

- **Headmaster's List:** 95 or higher average, with no grade below 90
- **Director's List:** 90 or higher average, with no grade below 85

National Junior Honor Society

National Junior Honor Society at Darlington is an academic service and leadership society. Members are encouraged to provide a good example to their fellow students and to assist anyone who needs help with academic subjects. Any current seventh-grader or eighth-grader who demonstrates the characteristics of leadership, scholarship, service, honor, and citizenship is encouraged to apply for membership in the National Junior Honor Society. The application process begins in January each year and consists of the following steps.

- A meeting will occur with all students in grades 7-8 to discuss the purpose of NJHS and the application process. A letter will be sent to parents and students outlining the application process and due dates.
- Students will notify the Faculty Advisor of their interest to apply.
- Applicants will first be assessed based on meeting the scholarship qualification (minimum grade requirement (87.5) set forth by the Darlington's Chapter of NJHS). Students who meet the scholarship requirement will have an opportunity to complete an application detailing their accomplishments in and commitment to Service, Leadership, Character, and Citizenship.
- Applications will be open for completion during advisory time. Students may ask for help from their advisor to complete the application.
- Nominees with behavior issues from the current academic year can be removed from consideration at this time.

Middle School Grading Scale

A+	97-100
A	93-96
A-	90-92
B+	87-89
B	83-86
B-	80-82
C+	77-79
C	73-76
C-	70-72
F	below 70

- All faculty and staff who teach, coach, or supervise the 7th and 8th grade students will provide feedback on the student's qualifications as they relate to Service, Leadership, Character, and Citizenship.
- Nominees will interview with two members of the Faculty Council and the Faculty Advisor.
- The Faculty Council will then assess all data from applications, faculty feedback, and interviews, and an invitation to join NJHS may be issued.

Students who are inducted in seventh grade will have the opportunity to be an officer in eighth grade. Students can be removed from NJHS membership following disciplinary action.

Qualifications for membership are based on the five pillars of NJHS:

- Scholarship - Per national guidelines, at a minimum, students must have a cumulative GPA of 87.5.
- Service-This involves voluntary contributions made by a student to the school or community, done without compensation.
- Leadership - Student leaders are those who are resourceful, good problem solvers, and idea contributors. Leadership experiences can be drawn from school or community activities while working with or for others.
- Character - The student of good character is cooperative; demonstrates high standards of honesty and reliability; shows courtesy, concern, and respect for others; and generally maintains a clean disciplinary record.
- Citizenship -The student who demonstrates citizenship understands the importance of civic engagement; has a high regard for freedom and justice; respects the U.S. form of government; respects the law for all citizens at the local, state, and federal levels; and demonstrates mature participation and responsibility in activities such as scouting, community organizations, or school clubs.

3.2. Course of Study

6th Grade	7th Grade	8th Grade
English 6	English 7	English 8
Ancient History	World History	American History
Math 6 Math 6 Advanced	Pre-Algebra or Pre-Algebra Honors	Algebra 1 or Algebra 1 Honors
Earth Science	Life Science	Physical Science
Spanish Foundations	Spanish 1 or Spanish 1A	Spanish 2 or Spanish 1B
Physical Education 6	Physical Education 7	Physical Education 8
Art Block: Band, Chorus, Drama, Orchestra, Communication Arts, and Visual Art Enrichment Classes: (varies by semester) Visual Art, Fitness, Jazz Band, Introduction to Engineering, and Robotics & Coding		

3.3. English

Darlington's English courses include extensive reading, intensive writing instruction, and instruction in skills relevant to the study of English, including vocabulary, grammar, spelling, study skills, and research strategies.

English 6

In 6th grade, English students engage with the Amplify Core Knowledge Language Arts (CKLA) program, a comprehensive curriculum designed to build strong foundational skills in reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Amplify CKLA integrates knowledge-building content with structured literacy instruction, allowing students to deepen their understanding of complex texts across a range of genres and topics. The program emphasizes vocabulary development, reading comprehension, grammar, and writing through both fiction and nonfiction texts that support cross-curricular connections. Through guided discussions, written responses, and close reading activities, students develop critical thinking skills and a deeper appreciation for literature and informational texts.

English 7 and English 8

These courses emphasize the development of core literacy skills in reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Through daily reading assignments both in class and at home, students engage with a variety of texts, learning to analyze literature using evidence-based reasoning, synthesis, paraphrasing, and the identification of key ideas. Independent reading is a central component, fostering personal reading preferences, genre exploration, and a greater sense of ownership over comprehension outside of classroom discussions.

Recognizing that time spent reading correlates strongly with gains in comprehension and vocabulary, students are encouraged to read self-selected literature in addition to assigned texts. While classroom instruction provides direct teaching and modeling of reading strategies, independent reading offers meaningful opportunities to apply those skills, deepen understanding, and expand vocabulary. Independent reading includes any literature or texts chosen by the student beyond the required reading assigned in class.

Effective written communication is a critical academic and professional skill. Students engage in both informal and formal writing assignments, exploring the full writing process from drafting and revising to sharing and reflecting. A variety of genres and writing conventions are introduced, allowing students to experiment with voice, structure, and purpose as they refine their ability to express ideas clearly and meaningfully.

3.4. Spanish

In keeping with the national standards for foreign language learning, the main goal of the middle grades language program is to equip students with communicative skills that allow them to interact with other Spanish speakers. As students achieve proficiency in the language, they are also exposed to cultural practices, products, and perspectives of the Spanish-speaking world.

The program is designed to prepare students for the challenges of an increasingly global community. The department strives to teach students how to make meaningful connections to other disciplines and their community to create true global citizens.

Students are placed in these courses by their teachers, based on their readiness.

Grade 6 and students new to Darlington in grades 7 and 8

Spanish Foundations

This course is a platform for introducing and building vocabulary, grammar in context, and communication skills. It stresses acquisition of Spanish in both written and oral form by presenting four skills: reading, writing, listening, and speaking. The four skills are taught within the context of cultural practices in the Spanish-speaking world. The goal is to move the novice-low learner into a novice-high proficiency level. Students in the elementary program may move into an intermediate low or intermediate mid proficiency level.

Grade 7

Spanish 1 or Spanish 1A - Teacher recommendation based on readiness and previous academic experience

Spanish 1A

This course is intended for students who benefit from extra practice with novice-level language. Students in Spanish 1A will take one year to learn the skills and cultural practices that students in Spanish 1 will learn in one semester. The slower pace gives the students more opportunities to grasp the fundamental concepts and vocabulary of the language while enhancing their communication skills at their own pace. Novice language acquisition and learning how to learn a second language are the key to a student's success in this course.

Spanish 1

Spanish 1 builds on the vocabulary, phrases, and grammatical context learned during the introductory course, emphasizing interpersonal, interpretive, and presentational communication in Spanish. It aims to develop reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills up to the intermediate low or mid-level. The units are story-based, which provides many opportunities to learn the language interactively. Vocabulary and grammar are learned in context.

Grade 8

Spanish 1, Spanish 1B, or Spanish 2 - Teacher recommendation based on readiness and previous academic experience

Spanish 1B

This course is intended for students who benefit from extra exposure and practice with novice-level language. Students in Spanish 1B will take one year to learn the skills and cultural practices that students in Spanish 1 will learn in their second semester. The slower pace gives the students more opportunities to grasp the fundamental concepts and vocabulary of the language while enhancing their communication skills at their own pace. Novice language acquisition and improving their skills to learn a second language are the key to a student's success in this course. At the end of this year, the students will enter Spanish 2 as a freshman. It is possible to enter the honors course depending on the final grade and the teacher's recommendation.

Spanish 1

Spanish 1 builds on the vocabulary, phrases, and grammatical context learned during the introductory course, emphasizing interpersonal, interpretive, and presentational communication in Spanish. It aims to develop reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills up to the intermediate low or mid-level. The units are story-based, which provides many opportunities to learn the language interactively.

Vocabulary and grammar are learned in context. At the end of this year, the students will enter Spanish 2 as a freshman. It is possible to enter the honors course depending on the final grade and the teacher's recommendation.

Spanish 2

The overall goal of this second year of Spanish is to develop proficiency and competence in the four language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) essential to communicative language learning. This course expands on the different uses of the present tense and AP themes learned during Spanish I. It also introduces students to discussing events in the past. Students continue to build their linguistic skills with more advanced verb tenses, taught within the context of purposeful activities and relevant readers. At the end of this year, the students will enter Spanish 3 as a freshman. It is possible to enter the honors course depending on the final grade and the teacher's recommendation.

Students will receive credit for one year of their required foreign language credit at the Upper School level when they take Spanish 1, Spanish 1B, or Spanish 2 in the eighth grade. The grade will appear in their High School Transcript. They will then be required to take at least two more years of Spanish to fulfill their foreign language requirements.

3.5. History

History courses at Darlington encourage students to become more aware of the world around them. To do this, students must have some knowledge of the past and the people and events that paved the way for the modern world.

Ancient History (Grade 6)

Students continue to develop map skills as they reflect on the importance of geography in the Journey of Ancient Days, including the study of Early Man, Mesopotamia, Egypt, India, China, Greece and Rome. Students explore the significant contributions these cultures have made and investigate the particular foundations of Western civilizations. Students will be involved in hands-on learning experiences in which they will investigate and research each civilization. Throughout the year, students will examine each civilization and its relationship to previous civilizations to see how they interacted with one another.

World History (Grade 7)

Exploring world cultures through history and heritage is the theme for seventh grade. This course is a study of world history and geography during the medieval and early modern era. Students will study the development and changes of complex civilizations. They will identify and explore the similarities and patterns of these civilizations. Emphasis is placed on the fact that many of the civilizations developed simultaneously and impacted each other. All units will examine the religion, economics, politics, and social history of the medieval and early modern eras. Students will begin by exploring Arabia and the rise of Islam, then move into the Ottomans and the Mughal Empires, discover Medieval China and the Silk Road, and explore African Kingdoms, ending with the geography of the Mayan, Aztec, and Inca Empires. Note-Taking, writing, study skills, and critical thinking skills are emphasized, as well as the evaluation of primary sources. Students will also be guided through an in-depth research project of ancestry, immigration, and heritage.

American History (Grade 8)

American History students will study the story of the United States and its people. This course examines American History from the Revolutionary War through World War II. Students will learn fundamental concepts in civics, economics, and geography as they study American History in chronological sequence and learn about change and continuity in our history. Students will begin by exploring the American Revolution and our

new government, examine the first four Presidents and the War of 1812, analyze the struggles of the Civil War and Reconstruction, explore the Industrial Revolution and Progressive Era, and end with World War I and World War II. Note-Taking, writing, study skills, and critical thinking skills are emphasized, as well as the evaluation of primary and secondary sources.

3.6. Science

The science program for grades 6-8 fosters an awareness of the scientific world around us. By achieving a mastery of the basic principles of various science disciplines, students use this experience as a stepping stone to achievement in more advanced science settings.

Earth Science (Grade 6)

In this course, students will investigate the scientific concepts, theories, and principles that are associated with planet Earth as well as other celestial bodies. Major units of study include, but are not limited to, the following: Scientific Inquiry, Geology, Earth's Landforms, Plate Tectonics, Earth's Geologic History, Meteorology, Natural Resources, Energy Resources (with special emphasis on solar energy), and Astronomy. Students will use the scientific process of problem solving; compare and contrast the states of matter related to the Earth; explain the cause and effect relationship of forces related to the rock cycle; understand the forces which produce the ever-changing surface features through Plate Tectonics; understand the dynamics of weathering and erosion, along with its effects on Earth; identify the physical properties and chemical composition used to classify rocks and minerals; understand and explain the basic weather patterns that affect our region and North America; understand the benefits of the Darlington solar farm on campus, along with other alternative energy resources; explain the relationship between members of our solar system; explore the universe in relationship to the Earth; and understand the importance of natural resources to our planet.

Life Science (Grade 7)

Life Science is the study of all living organisms. Throughout the year, students will develop an understanding of key concepts related to life on planet Earth. Students will explore cellular structure, function, and organization; the classification of organisms and diversity of living organisms; relationships between organisms, populations, communities, and ecosystems; genetic coding and the inheritance of traits from parent to offspring; structure and function of the human body, and biomechanical movement of joints and muscles. The study of the human body will be accompanied by two dissections throughout the course of the year that will include preserved frogs, grasshoppers, and worms. A two-week unit on human reproductive health will occur in the spring.

Physical Science (Grade 8)

Physical Science uses a scaffolded, inquiry-based approach that covers both physics and chemistry. The content is broken down into hands-on, minds-on learning. Content is taught by confronting common misconceptions and then conducting experiments to dispel faulty information, replacing it with facts, scientific theory, and laws. Some of the topics covered include energy, force, heat, phases of matter, density, the Periodic Table of Elements, and atomic behavior.

Students will show competency in organization and mathematical analysis of data, manipulation of variables in experiments, identification of sources of experimental error, understanding and following specific directions, problem solving, leadership within group activities, and time management.

3.7. Mathematics

Students are required to complete three units of mathematics. Using teacher recommendations, students are placed in a course designed to inspire successful progress. Each course begins with a review of mathematical facts, operations, and algorithms. Then all courses emphasize mathematical reasoning, problem solving, communication skills, number relationships and theories, patterns and functions, and algebraic concepts.

6th Grade

In 6th grade, students use HMH Math in Focus: Course 1, a curriculum based on the Singapore Math approach that emphasizes a deep understanding of mathematical concepts through visual models, problem-solving, and real-world application. Key topics include number operations, fractions, decimals, ratios, and introductory geometry. The program encourages students to build strong conceptual foundations while developing procedural fluency. Through guided instruction and practice, students learn to approach problems methodically, think critically, and communicate their mathematical reasoning effectively. This course is offered for both Regular and Advanced class placement.

7th Grade - Pre-Algebra

In 7th grade Pre-Algebra, students continue with HMH Math in Focus: Course 2, which builds on the foundational skills developed in 6th grade. This course prepares students for Algebra I by introducing more complex topics such as expressions, equations, inequalities, proportional reasoning, and linear relationships. The curriculum maintains a strong emphasis on conceptual understanding, supported by visual models and real-world contexts. Students are challenged to apply their knowledge in multi-step problems, reason abstractly, and develop confidence in their mathematical abilities.

7th Grade - Pre-Algebra Honors

In addition to Pre-Algebra, this Honors course covers everything in Pre-Algebra plus solving equations including variables on both sides, applying algebra to Geometry.

Grade 8 - Algebra 1

Algebra I emphasizes basic algebraic concepts, mathematical language, and problem solving. This course includes a study of linear equations, writing and graphing linear equations, solving linear inequalities, solving systems, linear functions, exponential equations and functions, polynomial equations and functions.

Grade 8 - Algebra 1 Honors

Algebra I Honors covers the same topics as Algebra, but at greater depth. Designed for the highly motivated, inquisitive math student, this rigorous course emphasizes the development of thought processes. Students are required to take three mathematics courses at the Upper School. The required units include Algebra I, Geometry, and Algebra II. If Algebra I is taken in the eighth grade, then a course beyond Algebra II is required.

Math 8 - Math Foundations Course - (***not offered every year, based on need*)

This course is designed specifically for Grade 8 students who would benefit from an additional year of foundational math instruction before enrolling in Algebra I in ninth grade. Utilizing the Singapore Math framework, this course emphasizes conceptual understanding, problem-solving, and visual learning to strengthen students' mathematical confidence and readiness for future coursework. Topics include operations with positive and negative numbers, fractions, decimals, ratios, percents, algebraic expressions, equations, inequalities, the coordinate plane, perimeter, area, volume, and introductory statistics. The curriculum follows a concrete–pictorial–abstract (CPA) learning progression, guiding students from hands-on experiences with manipulatives to visual representations and, ultimately, to abstract reasoning and symbolic work. This course supports students in reinforcing essential math concepts and skills, ensuring they are well-prepared for the challenges of high school Algebra.

3.8. Teaching and Learning Center

Mission

At Darlington's Teaching and Learning Center, we believe in knowing each student – their strengths, interests, motivation, passions, learning variabilities, and challenges. When we understand how students learn best, we can provide the right support at the right level, from universal classroom instruction to targeted help to intensive intervention when needed.

Unlike schools that treat learning support as separate, our TLC operates as an integrated system within Darlington School that recognizes learning differences and removes barriers. Our Teaching and Learning Center is a bridge connecting students, teachers, and families through open communication and a strengths-based approach focused on data-driven decision-making, accelerated learning, individualized goal-setting, and growth.

We believe that students can thrive when they have protected time for focused learning, guidance from learning specialists, and personalized accommodations that level the playing field and make learning and optimal achievement possible. Our programming emphasizes early literacy remediation and intervention to help students develop the ability to read to learn with joy and agency, while teaching essential study skills and executive functions like time management, self-regulation, and metacognition. We facilitate learning strategies instruction that supports students in developing communication, self-advocacy, engagement, goal-setting, and growth mindset skills. Our ultimate goal is to empower our students to become confident contributors at Darlington and beyond.

Beyond working directly with students, the TLC provides educational leadership throughout the school by promoting brain-based research, differentiated instruction, and universal design for learning by facilitating strong connections between curriculum, instruction, and assessment that optimize teaching and learning outcomes schoolwide.

Overview of Services

Parents play a key role as partners with the Teaching and Learning Center. When parents observe learning differences, academic struggles, or want better to understand their child's unique learning needs and potential, they can seek a psychoeducational evaluation with a licensed private psychologist. These evaluations, when shared with the school, serve as the foundation for Teaching and Learning Center services. The recommendations in evaluations provide insights into students' cognitive and academic profiles—including their strengths, backgrounds, motivations, passions, and learning challenges—which the TLC then uses to create a roadmap for appropriate support.

What a psychoeducational evaluation may reveal is that, beyond the universal instruction provided by classroom teachers, students may also benefit from targeted and/or intensive support designed to optimize their learning. When additional support is needed, these services are implemented within Darlington School's existing curriculum and instruction structures and the Teaching and Learning Center's available resources. The TLC serves students whose learning needs can be effectively supported within these existing programs and resources. The ultimate goal is for each student to be seen and understood, with support seamlessly integrated into their Darlington experience, enabling and empowering them to thrive.

After reviewing a student's psychoeducational evaluation, the Teaching and Learning Center meets with parents to discuss their child's learning profile and explain how TLC services integrate into their academic journey at Darlington. The TLC then recommends an appropriate service pathway and creates an individualized Student Support Plan that includes the student's learning profile, school accommodations,

learning strategies, measurable goals, and assessment data. These plans are updated regularly to reflect student progress and changing needs.

For students without a psychoeducational evaluation, the Teaching and Learning Center offers its Discovery Service. This short-term collaborative process includes developing a growing partnership between the school, teachers, and families initiated and led by the Student Support Team (SST) whereby learning challenges and variability are identified. The SST is composed of the Division Director, Assistant Division Director, Directors of the Teaching and Learning Center, and the school counselor. Through systematic observation and assessment, the SST identifies learning patterns, analyzes student capabilities, and can direct the implementation of targeted intervention strategies over a short period of time.

During the discovery service, external referrals to speech-language pathologists, occupational therapists, psychologists, or private academic tutors may be recommended. The SST may also recommend a psychoeducational evaluation to help inform next steps in a student's academic journey.

Middle Grades Services (Grades 6-8)

Direct Service - Learning Strategies Class (6th and 7th Grade): The Learning Strategies Class provides structured, protected time for work completion under the expert guidance of a Learning Specialist while teaching students about personalized accommodations for learning and testing. Instruction encompasses executive function skills, including organization, time management, and goal-setting, alongside comprehensive study skills development. Students develop ownership of their accommodations and learning strategies during these critical years. Scheduling options include 6th Period (Fine Arts block) or 7th Period (Enrichment block).

Consult Service: Consult Service is designed for students who have completed the Learning Strategies Class and/or demonstrate readiness for increased self-management and self-advocacy. This service level celebrates a student's successful development of executive functioning strategies and self-advocacy skills, recognizing that they are prepared to utilize Fine Arts and Enrichment blocks to pursue their passions and interests.

Our goal is for all 8th graders served by the Teaching and Learning Center to transition to Consult Service. 8th graders remain very connected to the Teaching and Learning Center and the middle grades learning specialist, as it is their "home base" three days each week during study hall. Additionally, 8th graders may utilize portions of the 6th or 7th period as needed for check-ins with the Learning Specialist or for structured work completion time. Consult Service is also available for 6th and 7th-grade students who demonstrate readiness.

Testing Accommodations: Learning Specialists serve as advocates and communicators, linking teachers and students when appropriate testing accommodations are needed. Students have access to testing accommodations both in classrooms and the Learning Center. Accommodations align with needs outlined in psychoeducational evaluations and student support plans. For more information, please contact the Middle Grades Learning Specialist.

Middle Grades Discovery Service: Learning variability may manifest differently during middle grades than in lower school years, as increased academic demands and environmental changes can reveal new learning challenges and patterns. Students who have not undergone psychoeducational testing may benefit from the Discovery Service. When teachers observe significant academic concerns, the Student Support Team (SST) initiates this process with families. Through systematic observation and assessment, the team identifies learning patterns, analyzes student capabilities, and develops targeted intervention strategies. This service may include DarBoost, a short-term intensive intervention period with a learning specialist to understand better how to support learning needs. The DarBoost may occur during the 8th-period exploratory block for a brief time, or during the 6th or 7th-period block for a new 8th grader. The SST may also recommend external

referrals to specialists or suggest a psychoeducational evaluation to guide next steps in the student's academic journey.

If you are interested in learning more about Middle Grades Direct, Consult, or Discovery Services, please contact [Jessica Laliberte](#), the Director of the Teaching and Learning Center.

3.9. Fine Arts

Darlington values the appreciation of a variety of visual and performing arts. As students enter the middle grades, the fine arts block provides an opportunity to build skills in areas of strength and interest. These experiences are also designed to allow choice and promote the exploration of new areas in the fine arts. Students will attend self-selected fine arts classes every other day for the entire school year. Self-selected classes include Band, Chorus, Drama, Orchestra, Communication Arts, and Visual Arts.

Band

The Band class provides an opportunity for students to play percussion and wind instruments together as one ensemble. Students will enjoy playing a variety of styles of music, developing and improving reading and playing skills, and becoming better musicians overall. The band performs several times throughout the year for seasonal and community concerts on and off campus, and students have the opportunity to participate in honor band and other events sponsored by GMEA, Georgia Music Educators Association, and local colleges. This class welcomes returning band members and beginners.

Chorus

Students wishing to sing and develop vocally have the opportunity to be a member of the Chorus class. This group will work on the development of the voice, continue to improve reading skills, and sing a variety of styles of music, all culminating in becoming a better and independent musician. This class will also perform seasonal and community concerts on and off campus and has the opportunity to participate in extra honor chorus experiences as sponsored by GMEA and local colleges.

Drama

This course will immerse students in theatre as a performance art through project-based learning, culminating in a full-length theatrical production. As students participate in the show development process from “page to stage,” they will be exposed to the anatomy of the script, stage direction, creative movement, acting theory, voice and diction, and the audition process. Drama provides a collaborative environment to strengthen imagination, expression, observation, concentration, and confidence, revealing and fortifying the actor’s natural talent. As students participate in formal rehearsals and a variety of workshops designed to support their production’s development, they will also explore the value of honesty, empathy, and vulnerability. This class is open to seventh and eighth-grade students.

Orchestra

The Orchestra class is for students who play string instruments in grades 6 through 8. This experience supports the development of the independent musician as students work to improve their ability to read music, skill and technique, and learn from a variety of musical styles. This class will perform throughout the year in seasonal concerts and community performances and welcomes beginning students.

Communication Arts

This course will cover the basics of photography, graphic design, and journalism. Students will take and edit photos, design page layouts and graphics, and learn how to interview and write captions and stories. This course is also great for students who, later in the Upper School, might be interested in working on the

yearbook or student newspaper or taking pictures. Cameras and software are provided, and this course is only available to eighth-graders.

Visual Art

This class will consist of two courses, which will switch at the semester. One semester is a 3D experience. Students will observe the world around them and explore the elements and principles of art. Students will have the opportunity to create 3D pieces to bring home and will focus on the art element of form by making unique 3D Art using paper, plaster, wire, and clay. The second semester focuses on drawing and painting with an emphasis on developing a greater depth of understanding of art and the application of the Elements of Art and Principles of Design to their work in a variety of media. The studio experience will include drawing, painting, illustration, and printmaking projects. This class may not be taken along with the art class during Enrichment block.

3.10. Enrichment Classes

3D and 2D Art

These year-long courses are designed for students who are seriously interested in the practical experience of art. They must have an understanding of the Elements of Art and Principles of Design and prior experience with applying these to creating art. Students must be motivated, responsible with materials, and accountable as they work on group and independent projects. Students should exhibit knowledge of basic drawing and painting techniques, as well as an understanding of color theory, to be considered for this class. Each student will demonstrate progress over time by developing a body of work and organizing a portfolio. This class may not be taken along with the art class during Art Block class.

Fitness

This class will consist of weight-lifting, strength and agility, aerobics, swimming, and various forms of fitness training. This class will be divided into a grades 6-7 section and a grades 7-8 section. Students will work on skills based on appropriate developmental level.

Robotics and Engineering

Students will be divided into two classes based on their engineering and coding experience. Students will work within a team structure to learn the basics of robotic design and programming. Students will learn basic engineering principles, basic computer programming and electronics troubleshooting, and robotics applications in industry. Students in the course will be selected by the course instructors to participate in the FIRST LEGO League competition.

Jazz Band

This class is a great opportunity for band members in grades 6-8 to learn and play jazz music. Students need to be currently enrolled in Band and have at least two years of experience in Band.

Learning Center

Placement in the Teaching and Learning Center course is not an option for all students. This is only an option for those students who have been identified for service through the Teaching and Learning Center. This time will be used for work with the Learning Specialist.

3.11. Exploratory Period

Exploratory Period provides students in grades 6-8 with an opportunity to explore grade-level-specific courses which enhance the curriculum through skill development.

Sixth Grade courses: Technology, Consumer Science, Mapping the World by Heart, and Future Problem-Solvers.

Seventh Grade courses: Leadership Institute, Current Events, Jr. TED Talks, and Art History.

Eighth Grade courses: Cultural Connections, Money Management, Research, and the culminating 8th Grade Capstone Project. Students will rotate through the courses every nine weeks.

3.12. Library

The mission of the Darlington School Library is to empower students to be enthusiastic lifelong readers, critical thinkers, and skillful researchers.

The Joanne G. Yancey Library, which serves all students in grades Pre-K to 8, contains over 13,000 books and over 3,000 eBooks. Students are provided access to many digital subscription resources, including Galileo, Gale, and PebbleGo.

Students may visit any time during the school day, with permission from their teacher, as well as their regular scheduled class time. As a vibrant hub of the school, the space is also used for Makerspace activities, parent meetings, faculty meetings, and is a popular hangout for middle grades students during break.

The library also collaborates with Pre-K through 8 teachers to integrate reading, information literacy, and research skills into all areas of the curriculum. Some of the broad topics in the library's curricular scope are reading with purpose for information and pleasure, the research process, ethical responsibilities of scholars and digital citizens, and presentation and application of information.

In addition to instruction, the library hosts programs like summer reading, the late-night library, Iditaroad, and new themed reading contests every year. The librarians are actively connected to the school community by being middle grades advisors, coaches, and club sponsors.

3.13. Physical Education

Physical Education for grades 6-8 focuses on providing students the opportunity to participate in a variety of physical activities designed to enhance overall fitness. During the middle grades, students will be able to participate in moderate to vigorous physical activity in a variety of settings for longer periods of time than during the elementary years.

All students in grades 6-8 who are not participating with a middle school athletic team during that particular season will be enrolled in physical education during the last period of the school day. Three days a week, students will participate in various conditioning activities such as plyometric training, agility, and endurance

drills. Two days each week, they will participate in games to improve hand/eye coordination, team concepts, and good physical health.

Middle grades students will have a better understanding of motor skills and movement patterns needed to perform a wide range of activities essential for later in life and to exhibit responsible personal and social behavior that shows respect for self and others.

4. Virtual Learning

If Darlington declares that the entire school will follow a virtual learning schedule, please refer to the following schedules. These schedules do not rotate.

Pre-K to 2 Grades

Teachers' discretion

Third Grade

8:10-9:00 - Literacy and ALP
9:00-9:50 - Math
9:50-10:10 - BREAK
10:10-11:00 - Science/Social Studies

Fourth Grade

9:00-9:50 - Math
9:50-10:10 - BREAK
10:10-11:00 - Science/Social Studies
11:00-12:00 - LUNCH BREAK
12:00-12:50 - Literacy and ALP

Fifth Grade

9:00-9:50 - Literacy A (including ALP) and Math B
9:50-10:10 - BREAK
10:10-11:00 - Literacy B and Math A
11:00-12:00 - LUNCH BREAK
12:00-12:50 - Science/Social Studies

Grades 6–12

ODD Days

9:00 - 9:50 - First Period
9:50 - 10:20 - BREAK/Advisory
10:20 - 11:10 - Third Period
11:10 - 12:10 - LUNCH BREAK
12:10 - 1:00 - Fifth Period
1:10 - 2:00 - Seventh Period

EVEN Days

9:00 - 9:50 - Second Period
9:50 - 10:20 - BREAK/Advisory
10:20 - 11:10 - Fourth Period
11:10 - 12:10 - LUNCH BREAK
12:10 - 1:00 - Sixth Period
1:10 - 2:00 - Eighth Period