Elementary School
Kindergarten-Grade 5

(307) 733-3729 • www.journeysschool.org

Academic Excellence • Extraordinary Relationships
Place-Based Education • Global Citizenship
Introduction
Journeys School is a Pre-Kindergarten through 12th grade independent school in Jackson Hole, Wyoming engaging college-bound students with an innovative and challenging curriculum that cultivates lifelong learning. Our program consists of four critical pillars that act together to empower students to make a positive difference in the world. Our students accept academic challenges and ask hard questions in a balanced, open-minded, and reflective manner. Journeys School is accredited by the Pacific Northwest Association of Independent Schools and is accredited to offer the International Baccalaureate Diploma Program for grades 11 and 12.

The four programmatic pillars include academic excellence, extraordinary relationships, place-based education, and global citizenship. First, the school offers a strong college-preparatory, academic program guided by both critical knowledge and core competencies. The core competencies include skills such as communication, collaboration, leadership, and creativity. Second, fundamental to our program are the extraordinary relationships between students, parents, and faculty. Our commitment to supportive relationships within the community is important to the success of our program. Finally, in order for students to understand the world, place-based education and global citizenship are the final two pillars of the program. At an early age, students begin to learn about the ecological and cultural communities at local and global scales. These skills prepare students to learn, communicate and thrive in a diverse, global community.

Elementary School Program Overview
The elementary school program nurtures each child to reach their full potential. The faculty values a whole-child approach so that both the academic and social-emotional realms are developed and enriched. Each child is known well by all members of the school community. The school community focuses on three key values. First, our students try hard by working to our full potential at all times. Second, our students treat with respect by honoring diverse opinions and backgrounds, representing ourselves and the school with high standards, and caring for the place where we are learning and those we are learning with. Finally, our students take responsibility for their own actions and learning.

Teaching Philosophy
Classroom instruction is focused on four key areas. First, instruction is student centered and differentiated to challenge all learners. Second, instruction is based on respectful relationships and a whole-child approach. Third, instruction is directed by authentic assessment and individual accountability. Finally, instruction is experiential, place-based, engaging, and relevant where appropriate. These four areas are found in all classrooms throughout the academic year. Students are actively engaged in their learning and willing to take on challenges in a warm environment with high expectations.

Schedule
The school year is approximately 175 days long and runs from 8:15 – 3:30 each day. An after-school enrichment program is available for an additional fee from 3:30 – 5:00 each day.

8:15 a.m. Morning Meeting
8:30 Language Arts
10:00 Recess and Snack
10:30 Math
11:30 Lunch and Recess
3:00 Hands To Work / Thank You Circle
3:30 Dismissal / Afterschool Enrichment and Exploration Programs
Core Competencies
Journeys School enhances the academic program with the development of core competencies that are critical to success in the modern world. These skills are integrated throughout all programs at the school and include the development of:

1. exceptional verbal, technological, and written communication skills (Communication)
2. collaborative skills to work well with others (Collaboration)
3. a creative mind that recognizes novel and varied approaches to problem solving (Creativity/Problem Solving)
4. leadership capacity in a variety of environments (Leadership)
5. skills to understand, steward, and serve both local/global communities (Community Awareness)
6. empathy, compassion, respect, and high ethical standards (Compassion)
7. tools to synthesize and analyze connections between concepts (Synthesis/Analysis)
8. discipline, organization, and commitment to complete difficult tasks (Organization/Persistence)

Academic Program (Critical Knowledge)
Throughout their academic years at Journeys School, students are immersed in seven core discipline areas including mathematics, literacy, science, social studies, Spanish, fine arts and physical education. The curriculum at Journeys School is thematic in nature and guided by student and teacher-generated questions. A curriculum map is used to facilitate integration between disciplines.

Each core area is guided by a set of outcomes generated from the best available standards. The set of standards used as a benchmark are Content Knowledge: A Compendium of Standards and Benchmarks for K-12 Education written by the Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (MCREL), American Council of Teaching Foreign Languages, Massachusetts science and math standards, National Science Education Standards, and California language arts standards.

The language arts and math classes are structured to allow students of different ages to be placed within similar ability classes. Students can thus progress at an appropriate pace, accelerating or remediating as needed.

Language arts
Journeys School’s elementary language arts program is heavily influenced by the work of Kathy Collins and her book Growing Readers and Lucy Calkins of the Readers and Writers Project at Teachers College/Columbia University. Our balanced literacy framework has five distinct components with our teaching geared to the individual learner.

Independent Reading Workshop is the first of these components. Our goal is to foster the development of readers who not only know how to decode and answer comprehension questions, but also readers who can discuss the story, and connect it to their own lives. Each day, students have an opportunity to read independently at their “just right” reading level. Students are taught how to choose “just right” books and the strategies needed to improve their reading. During each workshop time, teachers listen to students read independently and give feedback and suggestions. Usually this feedback will come in the form of a wish and a star. The wish is something the teacher would like to see the student try (re-read a sentence for fluency) and the star is something that the teacher feels the student is doing very well (using the pictures for clues).

The second component of our literacy program is Writing Workshop. Each writing workshop begins with a mini-lesson and students work through seven units of writing over the year. While the end product of a writing assignment will come in many forms, each student will have focused on the same skill. Writing during this time is sometimes theme related, but may also be free in focus, allowing imaginative minds to explore the world of writing.
Shared Reading is the third component. Shared reading takes on many forms throughout the day. For example, each morning we begin with a morning message which the students read together and discuss everything from conventions to homophones. Later in the day, students may explore a poem or read a story together.

The fourth component is Read Aloud. Read aloud takes place during our literacy time in small groups. Many times our read aloud is theme based, allowing us a natural space to tie literature into our theme. This also fosters more discussion and provides a common story to review comprehension strategies. Finally, it is a time to model what strong readers do to foster comprehension and connections.

Word and Grammar Study is the fifth component of our literacy program. Students participate in both interactive and independent activities to initially build phonemic awareness, spelling, vocabulary, and grammar. Spelling curricula include Words Their Way and Primary Spelling by Pattern and grammar instruction is based on Evan-Moor’s Daily Language Review.

Mathematics
The goal of our math program is to help students develop a strong math base as well as instill a sense of excitement and confidence in students. To help us achieve this goal, we use the Everyday Mathematics curriculum developed by the University of Chicago School Mathematics Project. The focus of this curriculum is to enable children to learn more mathematical content and become life-long mathematical thinkers.

Skills and concepts taught in the elementary program are divided into 6 categories which include: operations and computation; numeration; patterns, functions and algebra; data and chance; measurement and reference frames; and geometry. Each strand is addressed throughout each grade level. The spiraling nature of the curriculum allows students to build upon a strong foundation and extend concept understanding. Everyday Math places special emphasis on establishment of links to past experiences—both in the classroom and in everyday life, discussion of ideas and comparison of equivalent expressions. When possible, problems and projects presented in the texts are adapted to be relevant to Jackson Hole and the current focus of our classroom themes. Computational skills are developed through added exercises to help develop accuracy in basic areas such as addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division.

Spanish
Based on the National Standards for Foreign Language Learning, the Journeys School approach to foreign language learning focuses on communication, cultures, comparisons, connections and communities. Thematic instruction is an integral part of early language learning at Journeys School. It helps to create a relevant learning environment in the elementary foreign language classroom. Elementary students explore specific themes while developing cognitive skills which tie directly to other academic areas and help reinforce the goals of the elementary curriculum. Lessons encompass geography, math, music, art, social studies, physical education and Latino culture. Learning is spiraling in nature so that students build their listening skills and become increasingly independent in their use of written and spoken Spanish.

Social Studies
The social studies program is designed to provide students with a thematic and integrated context for learning that teaches students about human interactions with the biological, physical, and social world. Citizenship and understanding communities in the early grades transforms to government and history in the older grades. Curriculum allows for students to learn about local, United States, and global history while making connections to common themes within the social sciences. Social studies activities include current events discussions, literature study, geography, cartography, research, note taking, presentations and journeys.
The annual theme drives the social studies curriculum and serves as a basis for both the integration of content areas and discovery of the many and varied ways in which humans interact within the Jackson Hole community, the nation, and the world. Experiences related to social studies have included a map making introduction to the mountains of Wyoming, a student designed mock presidential election, a document and literature-based look at the American Revolution and creation of navigational instruments used by early explorers. In their quest to discover more about place and beyond, Journeys School students have gone dog sledding, hiked along the Snake River, viewed Jackson Hole from the top of a mountain, and participated in an historical reenactment aboard a ship in San Diego Harbor.

Science
The elementary school science program is based on the concepts of inquiry and understanding place. Using topics in the fields of biology, physics, chemistry, earth science, technology, and environmental science, students learn to act and think like scientists. Through the inquiry method, students learn to ask relevant questions, make hypotheses, and design experiments. The program is based on the yearly themes which maximizes integration with other subject areas and the Jackson Hole community. Learning about scientific process and science concepts in context allows students to understand the role of science in the world beyond school. Classroom and field investigations are designed to provide hands-on opportunities for students to experience science. Students in elementary school are found actively doing science, not passively listening to science. This emergent curriculum allows for students to have their inquiries drive the science program and for an interdisciplinary approach to be utilized during investigations.

Visual Arts
All students in the elementary school participate in visual arts classes twice a week. Students create artwork using the principles and elements of art and design, and demonstrate an understanding of how subject matter, symbols and ideas are used to communicate meaning in art. Lessons are integrated into thematic units reflecting the broader goals of the elementary curriculum. Students familiarize themselves with periods of art and cultures throughout history. Students learn about important artists and make connections to these artists’ styles in their own work. Journeys School artists have the opportunity to work with various media, learn new techniques and processes, and develop and honor their own unique artistic talent.

Performing Arts
All elementary students also participate in music and drama classes twice a week. They sing and listen to the works of master composers, learn to recognize the instruments of the orchestra by sight and sound, compose original music and create their own musical instruments. Students compare world and ethnic music as they make connections with themes they are studying in the rest of the elementary curriculum. All students also prepare for various performances — both musical and dramatic — throughout the school year. Students focus on playing percussion instruments, and all students who take private lessons are encouraged to bring instruments to school to play and demonstrate.

Physical Education
Elementary students receive Physical Education taught by a specialist for 45 minutes, twice per week throughout the year. P.E. at Journeys School is in congruence with the “new P.E.” That is, P.E. which is standards based, deliberately sequenced, accessible to all students, and focused on lifetime skills and physical fitness. Sportsmanship, leadership, fitness concepts, and healthy student attitudes towards physical activity are woven into fitness activities and psychomotor skill development. The elementary program utilizes the SPARK curriculum (Sports, Play, and Active Recreation for Kids). SPARK is the most highly researched P.E. curriculum in the world and has been praised by the Center for Disease Control, the Surgeon General, and the National Academy of Sciences as a school-based solution to the nation’s health care problems. Key components of the curriculum include 1) providing enough equipment for every student, 2) inclusive activities that never eliminate students, and 3) moderate to vigorous physical activity throughout each lesson.
In kindergarten through second grade, the physical education curriculum focuses on locomotor skills (skipping, galloping, and running, etc.) and non-locomotor skills (throwing and catching, kicking and dribbling, volleying and striking). Students also learn to move in various tempos, levels, and pathways. An abundance of chasing and fleeing games develop student’s cardio-respiratory endurance. Nearly all activities are non-competitive for this age group. In third through fifth grade, students are introduced to several team sports. Fundamental skills and teamwork are emphasized over winning. Fitness takes an increasingly important role at this level. Several times per year students participate in fitness assessments (9 minute run, 30 second push-up, and 1 minute curl-up).

Additionally, Journeys School partners with community organizations to teach all elementary students dance, yoga, gymnastics, and swimming. The annual Winter Sports Program consists of ice skating, Nordic skiing, and alpine skiing or snowboarding at Jackson Hole Mountain Resort.

Service Learning
Integral to the Journeys School mission, service learning occurs throughout the school year at all levels. In the elementary school, students participate in age-appropriate service projects. These projects give students the opportunity to apply their knowledge and academic skills to a real community need. Students develop partnerships and a sense of shared responsibility with community members, as well as feel valued for their service to others. Service learning encourages elementary students to take responsibility and to make decisions. They become engaged with the larger contexts of self, family, school, community and the world.

Technology
Technology is integrated into the elementary school program both to enhance learning within a content area and to increase technology literacy for students. By the end of the elementary school experience, students have competency in word processing, spreadsheets, typing, and presentation software. These skills then become tools for success in the middle school. Search engines, media presentations, audio recording, and other tools become important in the curriculum in the older grades.

Capstone Program
The end of the second, fifth, eighth and twelfth grade years at Journeys School offer challenging and extensive finishing programs that prepare students for the next level of schooling. During these years, students are given leadership roles to help develop the core competencies and integrate their content knowledge.

Second grade students meet once a week as a second grade cohort. The focus of the meetings changes each trimester. The fall trimester focuses on leadership skills, and students work collaboratively to define leadership and practice the skills necessary to lead successfully. In the winter, the focus shifts to writing skills and self-reflection. Students learn about multiple intelligences and reflect on their own learning experiences. Students also create self-portraits with an emphasis on what they value most about themselves. Finally, the spring trimester focuses on public speaking and presentation. The culminating project is a photo-story depicting their lives as learners. Students write a script and create a computerized photo autobiography that depicts their life of learning. These stories are shared with the entire community during the last week of school. The students also participate in a yearlong Capstone Spanish program. Meeting once a week, the class focuses on furthering their conversation and their leadership skills.

The fifth grade capstone program is designed to facilitate the transition between elementary and middle school. It provides a way for students to demonstrate and celebrate the knowledge and skills learned throughout their elementary years. It also helps students and parents realize the importance of refining skills such as organization, long range planning, independent research, essay-style composition, creative expression, presentation and service to community in preparation for middle school. Students accomplish capstone goals by reflecting on their own connections with the Jackson Hole ecosystem. The culmination of the capstone year is a sailing experience in the Pacific Northwest. The fifth grade program includes the development of a place-based topic and question, research and analysis of
findings, composition of 1,000 words, service learning (10 hours), a creative work (original music, art, or writing), and a presentation of project components. Past projects include Recent Changes in the Black-capped Chickadee Population, Women Who Played Important Roles in the History of Jackson Hole, Connecting to Place and Family through Fly Fishing, Sustainable Design for Teton Science Schools' Staff Housing. Fifth graders have contributed service hours by shoveling snow off roofs, cleaning animal cages, donating family research to the Jackson Historical Society and marketing bird safety stickers to raise funds for treatment of injured swans.

Curricular Themes
Each year at Journeys School, teachers and students explore a theme in depth. This annual theme allows for a more interdisciplinary approach to teaching all subjects. The theme also promotes the acquisition of a sense of place through education. A three year rotation of themes allows for students to experience each theme twice in different contexts throughout their elementary school years. The themes include communities, pathways/beginnings, and explorations. Within the year, each trimester has a focal theme that helps guide the specific curriculum. Science, social studies, and the arts are primarily driven by the curricular themes.

Classroom Assessment
Assessment is a constant part of the educational experience at Journeys School and has a primary goal of informing instruction. Assessment takes many forms such as classroom observation and more formal written or oral assessments. Through ongoing observation, teachers adjust their curriculum to support all students. Student groupings are both flexible and fluid, allowing teachers to shift students to best meet individual needs. Formal written or oral assessments take place once per trimester to assess student progress.

In all classes, students are routinely assessed using a variety of metrics. An online math and reading assessment is conducted four times per year to judge progress on learning goals. Additional information is collected through spelling assessments, written essays, class performance, presentations, and a myriad of other formats. Most assessments is criterion based where students are evaluated against a set of learning outcomes.

Beginning in grade 3, students take the CTP4. Designed by Educational Records Bureau, this annual test allows for the evaluation of progress and national/independent school norms for all students.

Twice a year, students, teachers and parents gather for Learning Team Meetings. The goal of these meetings is to keep parents informed about what is being learned in school and about how individual students are performing. Students begin the meeting by giving parents an overview of their work, including both challenges and successes. After the student has presented, the parents and teachers have an opportunity to discuss the student’s performance without the student present. These meetings are integral to keeping parents informed about how their child is doing, as well as informing them about ways they can help support their child at home.

Trimester Reports are written three times a year at the end of each trimester. This report is broken down into curricular areas and includes a curriculum overview of the trimester and individual student narratives for language arts, math, community, art, music, Spanish, physical education, science, and social studies. Trimester reports serve as a written summary of what was discussed in Learning Team Meetings. Trimester reports also include a benchmark assessment that outlines a student's individual progress on specific skills in the area of reading, writing and math. These assessments highlight skills that were addressed during the previous trimester.

At the end of each year, student work is shared in portfolio format to the community. These portfolios reflect examples of assignments from all content areas and demonstrate growth and strengths individual to each student.
Extended Journeys
At the core of the Journeys School approach to learning is the idea of students learning outside of the classroom. A journey is a direct experience in the ecological or cultural environment that serves as an essential part of learning. Whether a few moments or a few days, a journey includes thoughtful faculty planning and meaningful student inquiry and reflection. A journey integrates curriculum, promotes community and deepens one's sense of place.

In the elementary school students go on frequent day journeys to explore curricular themes. For example, during the study of our local community, students might visit the hospital and visit the maternity ward or meet with the mayor and hold a mock council meeting about an issue that is currently in front of the council. Elementary students also participate in three extended journeys each year. These extended journeys range in time from one day to five days and include a variety of locations around Wyoming and Idaho.

Community Leadership
A strong sense of community is a fundamental element of Journeys School. The school-wide community leadership program ensures that this sense of community continues to grow. Through all-school meetings and family groups, students interact regularly in multi-age environments. Each student, PreK through 12th grade, is a member of a Family Group. These groups meet regularly throughout the year to work on projects. The focus of these meetings varies from service learning projects to snow sculpture competitions. All-school meetings take place once a month and allow different levels to showcase their work. It is also an opportunity for students to make school-wide announcements and appreciations.

Advisory
Every grade level at the Journeys School has an advisory program in which a small group of students is matched up with a teacher. In the lower elementary level, the teacher advisor runs the Learning Team Meetings for his/her advisees, writes their trimester reports and acts as the parent liaison. If a parent has a particular concern about their child, they may call their child's advisor at any time. Frequently, students meet in their advisory groups to work on a life-skill or cooperative activity together. Advisory groups also allow teachers to break the class up into smaller groups for various projects or journey activities that may happen throughout the year.
Admissions
Journeys School does not discriminate on the basis of race, gender, sexual orientation, color, ethnic, or national origin in the administration of its educational policies, admission policies, financial aid programs, or any other school administered programs. Admission decisions by the Admissions Committee are based on:

1) available space and the makeup of the particular grade level;
2) previous student performance, effort, ability, community involvement, attendance;
3) whether Journeys School has an appropriate program to meet the student’s needs;
4) parent support of the Journeys School program, philosophy, mission and its faculty/administration.

Priority is given to siblings of current students and students with a Teton Science Schools relationship.

The Admissions Director and/or faculty will meet with interested applicants. We expect that the parents and the student visit the school, preferably when school is in session, and that the decision to enroll is a joint and mutual decision between parent and child. Records of each applicant's past educational experiences and teacher recommendations are requested to better assess the developmental level of the student. Once a student has been accepted, signing an enrollment agreement and making a tuition deposit finalizes enrollment and guarantees a student’s place at Journeys School.

Faculty
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All requests for information can be directed to admissions@journeysschool.org or 307-734-3710.
More information can be found at www.journeysschool.org.