
Lake Program Guide



Established in 1972

JOYFUL LEARNING ZONE

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Welcome to the Lake!

At Wingra School, “Lake” is the term used to describe the level comprised of nine, ten and eleven year olds. Students from the two Lake classrooms are together much of the time, both for academic and social activities. We use the term Lake with our students, so that when an activity involves both Room 105 and Room 107, they know exactly what we mean. The Lake classrooms share math times, literacy, read-alouds, and all of our unit studies. Depending on the activity, students may work in either classroom. Lake teachers strive to work with all the students of the Lake, not just those in our own rooms. All Lake teachers will contribute to the conference reports.

At certain times of the day, the sliding doors between the rooms will be closed. Each classroom develops its own character and personality. For example, the school day ends with a student-facilitated closing group in each room. We go to all-school classes, such as Art, Literacy, Music, Physical Education, Spanish and Technology by classroom.

The Lake has its own unique traditions. The annual Upham Woods overnight is a community-building experience that happens early in the school year. Lake students are in charge of the Wingra School Store. This benefits the students with real-life math skills and benefits the school community by providing healthy snacks.

A two-year placement in the Lake allows students to experience a continuum of growth with increasing independence, while deepening understanding of academic subjects and community relationships.

Features of Progressive Education at Wingra School

- **Program as Working Model**

As an independent school we have the autonomy to design and implement the kind of program we know best for children. The well-being of children and a deep understanding of childhood are at the core of all our decisions. All constituents contribute to sustaining this model. We encourage other educators to inquire, visit, and gather information about our program to support their own work and vision.

- **Developmentally-Appropriate Child-Centered Practice**

We never forget that students are children, allowing ample time for laughter, play, the arts, quiet time, and snacks. Our practice is grounded in an understanding of how children grow, develop, and learn. Our program includes active and interactive learning experiences, varied instructional strategies, a balance between teacher-directed and child-initiated activities, integrated curriculum, and learning centers.

- **Reflective Teaching and Teamwork**

Teachers plan and work cooperatively with colleagues throughout the school. Camaraderie and a sense of shared purpose are key to successfully meeting the needs of all students. Staff members collaborate to make decisions about all aspects of our program.

- **Integrated Thematic Curriculum**

Teachers create integrated curriculum based on units of study. Content concepts are introduced and extended through diverse, open-ended learning experiences designed to challenge students at different levels. As a group of learners becomes immersed in this shared inquiry, there are opportunities for individuals to pursue particular areas of interest.

- **Hands-On, Interactive Experiences**

There is a strong emphasis in our curriculum on problem solving, establishing connections, and communication. A range of hands-on projects and activities enhance instruction. The program often includes literature-based reading; process writing; manipulative-based, applied mathematics; relevant social studies; and experiential science.

- **Meaningful, Self-Directed Learning**

Children are taught to exercise their voice in their own learning process. Teachers help students understand how they learn and their own areas of strengths and challenges. Students are taught to make choices, set goals, keep track of their progress, and reflect on their growth and learning.

- **Always Learning**

Children learn in a continuum; they move from easier to more difficult materials and from simple to more complex strategies at their own pace. We do not see learning as a race, a competition or defined by a finite skill set. Teachers provide a rich and responsive environment.

- **Authentic Assessment**

Every student interacts with curriculum in a unique way that is of value. Success is measured in terms of relevance to the individual learner. Our goal is to academically engage and stretch children in meaningful ways while always treating them as whole people. The assessment we do is ongoing. The purpose of our assessment is to help us better understand students so that we may best support their learning and inform our curricular design.

- **Multi-Age Classrooms**

We see tremendous value in a range of learners working together. Teachers create curriculum based on their knowledge of child development and on the actual students in a given classroom. The better a teacher knows the children, the more engaging and tailored the program can be to that particular group of students. Students benefit from the cycle of being “youngsters” one year and “olders” the next.

- **Flexible, Mixed-Ability Groupings**

Children work in various grouping patterns on a regular basis—as individuals, pairs, triads, small groups, large groups, and whole class. The groupings are typically short-term and are based on interests, needs, learning styles, problem solving, and skill instruction. School-wide, children ages 5 to 14 interact in many ways. We deliberately create opportunities for students of all ages to learn with and from each other.

- **Community Building**

School and classroom communities are carefully nurtured through attention to relationships and routines that promote feelings of safety and belonging. People at Wingra know each other and are known well. We teach students to be compassionate, supportive, and inclusive. One special aspect of the Wingra program is an intentional social curriculum.

- **Parent Involvement**

Parents are seen as important partners in student learning. A continuous exchange of information is critical to keeping parents informed and involved. Partnerships are enhanced and solidified due to the extensive time spent together on behalf of the child. Opportunities exist for parents to be involved in many aspects of the program.

Goals of the Lake Program

Independence

Students in the Lake are working towards self-sufficiency. They explore a variety of strategies in search of the ones that work best for them. These elements of the Lake classrooms help students in their transition towards independence:

Plan sheets

Fix and finish

Academic choice/ work time

Goal setting/ goal feedback

Depth

Our monthly units and integrated curriculum are an important part of the Lake. Students brainstorm ideas for the units of study at the beginning of the year. The units incorporate an in-depth study of math, literacy and science. In each unit students will read, write and participate in hands-on investigations. We help each student find their comfort level and give them the support to challenge themselves.

- *Literacy Projects – Written and Illustrated Books, Magazines, Independent Project, Plays*
- *Monthly Reading Genres and Literature Groups*
- *Spelling/ Writing groups*
- *Science – inquiry based explorations, understanding scientific principles*
- *Math – communicate mathematical thinking, number sense, problem solving, basic facts and skills through the following programs:*
 - *Math Investigations*
 - *Math in Context*
 - *Journey to the Other Side*
 - *School Store*
 - *Money Math*

Community

Learning how to cooperate at the classroom level helps the students practice the skills needed to operate in a larger world.

Social justice

Civics

Interpersonal skills

Social studies – history, geography

Two year placement creates opportunities for leadership and mentoring

Learning how to come to consensus in large and small groups

Group facilitation is a rotating classroom job

Lake Schedule

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
8:45 Plan Sheet Unit/BOPS 9:15 Math	8:45 Spanish 105 PE 107 9:25 PE 105 Spanish 107	8:45 Morning Group Writer's Workshop 9:00 Math	8:45 Spanish Morning Group 9:00 Math	8:45 Writing 105 Music 107 9:30 Music 105 Writing 107
10:15-10:45 Snack/Recess	10:05-10:35 Snack/Recess	10:30-11:00 Snack/Recess	10:00-10:15 Snack	10:15-10:45 Snack/Recess
10:45 Spanish 105 Literacy 107 11:15 Spanish 107 Literacy 105	10:35 Math	11:00 Literature Groups	10:15 PE 105 Work Time 107 11:00 Work Time 105 PE 107	10:45 Spanish 105 Library Choice 107 11:15 Library Choice 105 Spanish 107
11:45 Recess/ Spanish Drama Club	11:45 Recess	11:45 Recess/ Rock and Jazz Band	11:45 Recess/ Group Band	11:45 Recess
12:15 Lunch	12:15 Lunch	12:15 Lunch	12:15 Lunch (Open Campus)	12:15 Lunch
12:45 Silent Reading/ Read Aloud	12:45 Read Aloud/ Clean Up/ Closing Group	12:45 Silent Reading	12:45 Silent Reading/ Group Band	12:45 Quiet Time/ Choir
1:15 Studio/ Classroom Time	1:15 Art 105 Tech107	1:15 Unit/ Work Time	1:15 Unit/Work Time	1:15 Learning Partners
2:00 DISMISSAL	2:15 Tech 105 Art 107	Work Time/ Read Aloud	Read Aloud	1:45 Read Aloud
STAFF MEETING	3:15 Dismissal from Specials	3:00 Cleanup, Reminders, Dismissal	3:00 Cleanup, Reminders, Dismissal	2:00 All School Rotation
				3:00 Cleanup, Reminders, Dismissal - EOWL

Curriculum Overview

Overview

The curriculum of Wingra School is based on the beliefs that:

- learning is an active process engaged in by each person in a unique way
- each individual's learning style and learning pace is respected and nurtured
- much learning takes place through exploration, discovery, and experimentation and
- individual learning is enhanced when it occurs in a stimulating social context.

We emphasize the inter-relatedness of knowledge and provide an integrated, theme-based, interdisciplinary curriculum. We believe children are active constructors of knowledge and learn best from first-hand experiences and primary resources drawn from the arts, sciences, and humanities.

Classroom Description

The classroom set-up is designed to create a safe and stimulating environment. Our classrooms are colorful, with lots of student work and art displayed. Each classroom includes a group area for whole class meetings, a classroom library, computers, large windows, and one room has a loft. Each classroom reserves space for learning centers. The number and focus of centers fluctuates depending on the unit topic and age of students. We construct engaging environments to suit different learning styles and moods. There are different sorts of environments – soft/hard, social/individual, high/low, quiet/active – that come together to create an engaging, caring and inspiring atmosphere. The older students sometimes are invited to participate in the process of classroom arrangement. The Lake does not have desks, rather, flexible work spaces.

Materials for all disciplines and weekly activities are available to students and teachers at centers, on tables, and in shelves. These include store-bought supplies, as well as student- and teacher- created resources. In addition, a changing assortment of materials relating to the current topic of study are featured to encourage students to extend their learning at the centers or on their own. Students and parents often create resources and bring in items to share.

Although our classrooms are often bustling with activity, they are also frequently empty. We believe that learning does not only occur in the school building. We take numerous field trips, often by city bus, to explore and learn from the many resources available in our area.

UNITS OF STUDY

The major elements of Wingra's program (literacy, math, science, social studies and personal development) are integrated into theme-based curriculum at each level.

In designing units of study, students are involved in brainstorming the topics. Student interests, enthusiasms, and needs are assessed and explored during the first weeks of school and throughout the year. Wingra teachers do their utmost to balance responsiveness with responsibility.

Teaching teams spend time finding primary sources and other resources throughout the community. They also look back on the themes of the previous year to ensure breadth and balance across the disciplines.

Because Wingra teachers see the world as their classroom, they regularly incorporate current events, trends and issues affecting children's lives into studies. Seasons and the natural world, holidays, important dates, access to community resources, and family backgrounds all also have a place in the shaping of our academic lives together.

In the Lake classrooms, units of study are usually four weeks long. Annually, students at this age participate in a research unit, a student-run unit, and the all-school unit.

Units of study are presented in two main ways: through guided choices at centers and through group activities. A variety of activities are offered to accommodate students' varied learning styles. The use of centers allows students to make decisions about time management, depth of study, and method of gathering and sharing information through a selection of guided choices with clear expectations.

Group activities make use of field trips, books, lectures, drama, demonstrations, games and discussion. Group activities allow students to:

- experience and practice speaking in and facilitating large groups
- work with a variety of people to make collective decisions
- work productively in small groups with a variety of people and
- engage in real, meaningful, democratic discussions.

Students learn to process and share information in a range of ways. Students are taught to facilitate discussions and problem-solving groups.

Lake Curriculum Summary

Social and Ethical Development

Guiding students to become responsible, compassionate, and caring individuals is an important and highly visible part of Wingra School's mission and, therefore, our curriculum. We aim to create caring classrooms in which individual differences are not just respected but highly valued. We help students build honest, positive connections with themselves, each other, their learning, and the world.

Starting in the youngest classrooms, children are taught how to respond to conflict with dignity and care. Many Wingra traditions, such as learning partners, all-school recess and lunch times, zipper club, and all-school units, are designed as opportunities for older students to learn to be stewards and mentors. It is a way for all students to learn to work and play together.

Students throughout the school arrive between 8:30-8:45. This relaxed arrival time is intended to allow students to ease into the day and reconnect with others. During this time, students read the morning message, look over the day's schedule, and start organizing the day's work.

Each classroom usually begins the school day with a group meeting. During these meetings, students are expected to be active participants in discussions about scheduling, managing classroom issues, and building classroom community. During morning group or meetings throughout the day, adults teach students to listen, facilitate, and address conflicts.

We teach students to:

- work collaboratively
- communicate their opinions and knowledge in clear and respectful ways
- solve problems in respectful, mutually acceptable, and thoughtful ways
- work towards consensus decision-making
- become independent problem solvers and
- learn inter/intra personal skills.

Our goal is for students to be confident, life-long learners who are active citizens, able to positively participate in their various present and future communities.

Literacy

Reading, writing, speaking, observing, thinking and listening are natural processes of communication that are integrated into every school day and throughout the curriculum. We emphasize the language processes in all content areas.

Comprehension is the core of our literacy program, with special emphasis given to thinking about the reading and writing processes. Skills and strategies are taught and reinforced within the context of meaningful language.

At Wingra, we believe that the learning environment in which literacy instruction takes place is critical to students' success. We recognize that intellectual maturation and growth are naturally uneven processes and that children's reading styles, skills and preferences vary in both their own development and in comparison with their classmates. There may be whole group instruction for a skill lesson, small groups based on interest for story discussion, as well as individual conferences during which the teacher is able to assess student progress. The Wingra literacy program establishes high expectations for all students while ensuring a safe classroom environment that encourages students to take risks. A variety of authentic assessment tools and strategies are utilized that measure student growth.

Reading and Literature

Each Wingra classroom has a good stock of age-appropriate reading materials. In addition, the school has a library for common use supplemented by public library resources. The Wingra School Librarian works to support and enhance the reading program by cultivating interest in literature through presentations and activities, and through building and maintaining a well-groomed library.

Lake-age students are transitioning from beginning readers to self-sufficient readers, reading for pleasure, information, direction and content throughout the day. Our goal is to build autonomy of earlier skills while focusing on strategies like comprehension monitoring, making connections, and inferring. We acknowledge the differences in development and scaffold these processes.

Students learn to use the library references and resources to select a variety of challenging literature as well as non-fiction books for research projects.

In the Lake, students read every day. Reading is viewed as a pleasurable activity and as a necessary skill for succeeding in the world. At this level, genres include biographies, in-depth poetry studies, humor, historical fiction, science fiction, mysteries, and multi-cultural stories. Students are taught to assess and utilize non-fiction sources for unit studies and research projects. Lake students become skilled in self-selecting reading material within a given genre.

Lake students meet in formal literature groups once a week to explore a variety of genres and to address specific decoding and comprehension skills. When selecting books, teachers consider student reading levels, balance of genres, connections to

the unit of study, and a broad representation of culture and gender in characters and authors.

On Fridays, students meet one-to-one with “learning partners” from other levels. This is an opportunity to use expressive oral reading skills and select appropriate literature for a partner whose reading level and interests are different from their own.

Writing

At Wingra School, we believe that reading and writing are naturally connected. We emphasize that both informal and formal written language are important forms of learning and communicating. Theme-based activities in all classrooms are presented to give children many opportunities to enjoy literature and to practice their own written language.

At the Lake level, students study a variety of writing styles as they learn to communicate effectively through their own writing. Every year, Lake students engage in one of two alternating large writing projects. During one year, they will produce a magazine. During the other year, they will produce a written and illustrated book. Students at this level write editorials, biographies, short stories, research papers, poetry, and plays. They learn to synthesize information by taking notes, summarizing, and paraphrasing. At this level, more emphasis is placed on the drafting and revision process as students continue to grow in their ability to self-edit for COPS (capitalization, organization, punctuation, and spelling). They also write dialogue journals to an adult and use the “Handwriting Without Tears” program to practice cursive skills each week.

Mathematics

The major purpose of mathematics at Wingra School is to help children understand and interpret their world and to solve problems which occur in it. We call this “math literacy.” At Wingra, we strive to create an environment that encourages children to explore, develop, test, discuss, and apply ideas in their world. We approach mathematics as an integrated whole, not simply a set of isolated topics.

In all Wingra classrooms, math instruction takes place daily in individual, small group, or whole class lessons. At Wingra, we work hard to foster what mathematicians describe as “number sense.” It is not enough that Wingra students know how to use algorithms. We expect them to know why they work. We believe that learning the facts, rules, and methods within a context of deep understanding improves retention, promotes fluency, and facilitates future mathematical learning.

In teaching mathematics, we believe that:

- Learning the signs, systems, symbols, and terms of mathematics is best accomplished in problem-solving situations in which students have the opportunity to read, write, and discuss ideas so the use of mathematical language becomes natural.
- As students communicate their ideas, they learn to clarify, refine, and consolidate their mathematical thinking.
- When learning new concepts, children need to connect the concepts to their previous knowledge, make it concrete using physical materials (manipulatives), and then move to symbolic/abstract representations of the concept. We make extensive use of manipulatives to foster the learning of abstract ideas.
- It is important for students to employ multiple strategies to solve problems and to share their strategies with one another.
- It is important for students to think critically and creatively about mathematical topics.

At the Lake level, mathematical themes of multiplicative thinking, equivalence and computational fluency are crucial elements of the mathematics program. Algebraic ideas begin to emerge at this level also and are investigated by children. While in the Lake we expect students to develop computational fluency-- efficient and accurate methods for computing that are based on well-understood properties and number relationships.

Math Investigations and *Math in Context* are programs we use to work on basic skills. *Math Investigations* involves cooperative learning, reasoning, communicating about mathematics orally, using manipulatives and exploring more than one strategy to solve a problem. *Math in Context* is a math program that starts in the Lake and continues in the Sky. Students investigate questions related to a theme and develop mathematical understanding and meaning from that theme. Teachers also create their own materials for teaching math skills.

While in the Lake, students will work with a variety of curricula and unit-related activities to develop money skills (school store, stock market, financial literacy), problem solving skills, fluency in all operations (addition, subtraction, multiplication, division), and growing experience with measurement, data, geometry, and algebra.

We use the program *Journey to the Other Side* for pre-Algebra skills. *Journey to the Other Side* combines math, reading, humor, music, and problem-solving in the context of a read-aloud novel. In *Journey*, we focus on the process of solving the problems, including the important first step of deciding what the problem is.

Science

Wingra School's hands-on approach to science enables students to construct a solid foundation of scientific knowledge and develop understanding of how the scientific method works. Students investigate, experiment, gather data, research, organize results, draw conclusions and ask further questions. The curriculum also focuses on stewardship of the Earth and its resources. Making sense of themselves and the world around them is ongoing. They learn to interact with the world and think like scientists.

The main objectives of our science program are to 1) inspire a sense of wonder in our students so they will continue to pursue scientific questions on their own and 2) equip our students with the knowledge and the tools they need to pursue answers to scientific questions.

At every level of Wingra, students study a range of physical, Earth, and life sciences, integrated into the classroom units of study. Our approach balances instruction and hands-on experiences. The curriculum is guided by students' developmental ages and stages, The Common Core Standards, Next Generation Science Standards, National Science Education Standards, and, most importantly, our progressive ideals.

In order to create a balanced science program in the Lake, we include studies of physical, biological, and ecological sciences. In the Lake students focus on problem solving and hands-on science activities. They grow in their ability to represent and interpret data, keep records, and use reference materials.

Lake science content includes the study of simple machines and physics; organisms and their environments; plant, animal and mineral identification and classification; properties and changes of properties in matter, light, and heat; electricity and magnetism; biomes and habitats; science and technology; structures and functions in living systems; cells, tissues and systems; metric measurement; and Earth and space science.

Social Studies

Wingra's social studies program is centered on the understanding of different communities: family, local, regional, national, and global. We recognize that this network of connections is as complex as humanity itself.

Through the study of other cultures and our communities, we seek to understand how and why these connections came to be (history), how our connectedness to others affects us and our immediate communities (social studies and geography), and how we, as participants, affect ever-widening communities (political science,

economics, and community service). We aim to teach our students to be responsible and responsive participants in each of the many communities to which they belong.

Our curriculum fosters this development through the use of cooperative groups, social problem solving, and conflict resolution. Much of the social studies curriculum is connected to our larger community. We seek to enhance tolerance and respect for diversity among people.

Each year, the Lake studies Wisconsin in a two-year cycle. In the first year, it is the history of the state from early geological times up to statehood. The alternating year is the history of the state from statehood up to present day. Within this unit, students learn about the culture, geography, economy and traditions of Wisconsin. In units of study throughout the year, students learn about current events, history, geography and issues of social justice.

Every unit studied at Wingra either directly relates to people and their communities or contains some study, usually extensive, of the theme's relationship to the communities around us.