THE ROEPER SCHOOL

STAGE II
PROGRAM GUIDE
2019/2020
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STAGE II PROGRAM GUIDE OVERVIEW

The Stage II program supports children in attaining self-understanding and a broader understanding of others. Children are respected and valued for their individual strengths and talents and are encouraged to appreciate those of others. Each child’s uniqueness is nurtured, and children are enabled to understand the interdependence of each of their classmates. Group discussions help children to feel understood, to develop empathy, to express their thoughts and feelings and to solve problems.

Since play is extremely important to the development of the child, it is an integral component of the Stage II program. Through play, children are offered opportunities for sharing, cooperation, leadership and following. Skills are gained in planning, organizing, learning rules and regulations. Play also involves ethical consideration, physical, cognitive and creative development.

The Stage II program is defined broadly in that it is much more than the mere acquisition of academic concepts and skills. This program provides multiple, integrated and personalized learning opportunities that result in the acquisition of concepts as well as critical life skills. Life skills are invaluable in the development of the child, and each classroom provides an environment supportive of the acquisition of these important understandings and skills:

- self respect
- empathy and respect for others
- appreciation for interdependence
- valuing of equal rights
- a sense of justice
- inner mastery
- a sense of competency.

As you read the program descriptions for each of the homeroom subjects and special classes that follow, please understand that the Stage II staff offers these learning opportunities in ways that are consistent with the needs of young gifted students.

- The curriculum emphasizes the relatedness of all subject areas because life experiences are integrated.
- The curriculum recognizes play as an important part of the child’s day.
- The curriculum builds on the child’s ability so that each learns how to organize facts and build creative thoughts.

Theme based units are explored so that problem-solving strategies, multicultural perspectives and community responsibilities are learned and valued.
In Stage II an atmosphere and environment is created that invites children to speak, to listen and to write. Many opportunities are presented in which children feel secure to experiment with language and communication and to gather information. Literature is presented continually in various ways and woven throughout all subject areas. This approach integrates speaking, listening, reading and writing. All of these skills are seen as complimentary rather than isolated elements in the acquisition of language arts skills.

Roeper is a place where conversation is expected and encouraged. Meeting and discussion times provide specific opportunities for children to express their ideas. They learn to speak so that others will understand, to listen carefully to others so that they might understand the ideas that are conveyed and to respond appropriately. Teachers take the role of facilitator and ask questions or comment in ways that help children clarify their thoughts and feelings. Communication is a joyful art at Roeper that is refined day by day.

Reading is approached in ways that are best suited to the child’s individual learning style. Teachers carefully observe and assess each child’s strengths and readiness to approach reading in the most successful way. It is recognized that a well-rounded approach to learning, that is, development of social, emotional, physical and cognitive skills, is imperative in enhancing reading skills.

Regardless of the child’s level of ability in reading, books are provided that are interesting and allow opportunities to develop skills. A wide variety of literature and trade books are used. Children read to teachers, to reading partners and sometimes to the entire group. Teachers read to the children throughout the day. Discussion about writing styles of authors enables children to think critically about books and to read for meaning. In reading their own books and those written by their classmates, children learn to think and feel like authors and readers. Word recognition skills are developed through phonics instruction. Sound and spelling knowledge is developed through the use of word families, spelling patterns, onset, and rhymes.

Daily experiences in writing are included in the language arts program. Children write books that can be published in the Stage II publishing center. As children write, they meet with their teachers to discuss theme, character, setting and story development. Editing for spelling and punctuation usually occurs only after a piece is completed. Journals are kept by each child. Entries are largely generated by each child, but sometimes are teacher directed. At this earliest stage in the writing process, children need to feel that they can experiment with words and language.

There are many activities which deepen and broaden the language arts experience for children. For example, finding reading materials that stimulate individual interests increases the motivation to read. Our Lower School Librarian plays an active role in this process. Science, physical education, dance, music, French, art and computer play important roles in enabling the child to gain competence in language acquisition and in deciphering print. These activities provide hands-on experiences that encourage the development of gross and fine motor skills, spatial perception, eye-hand coordination — all important skills in the development of language arts.
Children’s natural curiosity and determination to make sense of their world easily correlates with the process of mathematics. Everyday activities and routines enable children to recognize the patterns and rhythms around them that are the foundation of mathematical literacy.

Hands-on experience is a powerful tool in a young child’s acquisition of knowledge. Manipulatives are an integral part of learning in Stage II. Children come to know the “why” as well as the “how” of mathematics through the use of manipulatives. Specific skills are acquired as well as an understanding of the interrelatedness of different areas of mathematics. The process of exploration allows children to construct, test and alter their ideas, as they integrate them into their structure of understanding. Interaction with classmates and frequent opportunities to articulate thinking help our children learn to draw on an array of useful strategies.

Mathematics is presented as problem solving, communication, reasoning, making connections, estimation, number sense and numeration, concepts of whole number computation, geometry and spatial sense, measurement, probability, fractions and patterns. The Singapore program is spiral in nature, allowing children opportunities to revisit concepts until mastery is attained. Relevant lessons are provided to facilitate understanding at each level of development. The program and each child’s progression is highly individualized.

Dialog, discussion, experimentation and discovery are the underpinnings of the Stage II mathematics program. Each child’s progress is monitored carefully through individual and group observations and through one-on-one interviews. Regular assessment of student progress enables teachers to create and pace lessons that guide students’ thinking into higher degrees of mathematical literacy.
Stage II utilizes an inquiry-based approach in the teaching of Social Studies. Topics covered in Stage II are diverse and reflect the interests of the students. In individual homerooms and as a stage, teachers work with both large and small groups of children to develop in-depth units of study, based on interaction, exploration, collaboration, creativity and critical thinking. The children’s theories and ideas are the starting points for the investigations, and teachers work with students to challenge their thinking and help them grow. Continual documentation of the learning process allows teachers and students to reflect upon their work together and helps to determine which direction curriculum will flow. Children in Stage II are encouraged to express their knowledge in a variety of ways, which helps them to take charge of their own learning. Students share their learning through various art media, creative movement, oral presentations, written reports, storytelling, music and poetry.
Each Stage II homeroom visits The Children's Library twice per cycle — once for check-out and once for a lesson. During class visits, students enjoy read-alouds and activities designed to increase their motivation to read, appreciation of books, skills as readers, and love of reading. Students also learn to use the library, develop information literacy skills, and access informational and fictional materials. The librarian works closely with Stage II teachers and specialists to incorporate information literacy skills and meaningful uses of technology into the Stage II curriculum through collaborative lesson planning and teaching.

The Children’s Library is an integral part of learning at Roeper; a space where students come to pursue answers to their questions, discover new interests and ideas, and explore the world of literature. The library provides access to over 11,000 books, including picture books, early readers, chapter books, graphic novels, and non-fiction, as well as a growing collection of resources on giftedness, parenting, teaching, and ideas related to the Roeper philosophy. The Children’s Library is also equipped with a computer lab, Smart Board, and a variety of other electronic tools and resources for teaching and learning. Students, teachers, and parents from Stage I through Stage IV use the library to support and encourage a love of reading and lifelong learning.
The Art curriculum in Stage II combines structured classroom time with elective Free Choice. Classroom time is used to explore a variety of materials, improve on basic skills and build on students’ understanding of the importance of visual expression in their world. Free Choice is an elective program which reinforces these goals in an atmosphere of student-directed play, exploration, and experimentation. When students choose Art for Free Choice they will pursue their passions independently in “Open Studio”, with the benefit of teacher support as needed.

The Stage II Art program is designed to:

• nurture confidence with the processes of art as a form of self expression;
• expose students to a variety of media through hands-on experimentation;
• build a culture of joy, experimentation, risk taking, and problem-solving to build competencies, coordination, resilience and authentic discovery through creative play and the language of art;
• engage art history, living artists, and current events in art to root students in their own sense of self while celebrating differences, building connection and empathy with ideas and cultures that diverge from their own;
• introduce students to art as an integral part of society and their world, giving them the knowledge and experience that will enrich their understanding of art, deepen understanding of other subject areas, and nurture lives of connection and meaning.
Creative Movement is part of the Physical Education and Fine Arts curriculum at the Stage II level. In Creative Movement class boys and girls explore and discover many new ways to move and express themselves through movement. Creative Movement is based on natural movement rather than formal styles such as ballet, jazz or modern dance.

Creative Movement provides meaningful ways for young children to develop motor control, spatial awareness, personal relationships and self esteem. Children practice the fundamental locomotor movements such as walking, running, skipping, galloping, hopping, jumping and leaping. They also explore axial movements of stretching, bending and twisting while maintaining their balance. A wide variety of music is used, including classical, electronic, jazz, movie sound tracks, sound effects, New Age, silence and percussion instruments.

Children solve movement problems individually, with partners and in small groups. They demonstrate their solutions for their peers and talk about solutions that worked well, images they saw and how they felt while moving. Depending on the interest and ideas from the class, “dances” are developed and performed for their peers.
The Stage II computer lab houses 12 computers that are linked to a school-wide network. Stage II students have one block of computer instruction each cycle. Our curriculum uses developmentally appropriate software to build knowledge as well as computer skills. The Lower School Technology Mission Statement was written to guide the growth and change that we will experience in the Lower School Computer Department. It is included below.

Technology enhances many aspects of our lives. It makes some things so much easier that we are willing to endure significant learning/growing pains to use it. Schools have used technology to enrich curriculum and individualize instruction. We, at Roeper, must recognize all the uses of technology that apply to our students. It is important to provide instruction, be open to new developments and to challenge those students who may create the technology of the future.

In curricular applications, computers allow for precision as well as exploration. Added visual and auditory stimulation allows students to explore, sort out and grasp abstract concepts. With computers students can run a business, build a city, travel into history, process and publish their data and communicate their thoughts. These activities help our children develop the creative and critical thinking skills so vital to human beings in today’s society.

Technology links us to the world community and to the future. Classrooms can communicate with other classrooms, contact experts for advice and visit museums, archeological sites and laboratories. Students can share information with other students virtually anywhere in the world. These cooperative associations can greatly enhance the quality of learning. Studying the development of technology and computer languages provides students the opportunity to link the past to the present and develop a sense of what new technologies can be.

At Roeper, technology woven into learning experiences provides our students the opportunity to develop their intellectual power and creativity without regard to gender or previous experience. It allows flexibility and individualization of the curriculum to best fit each learning opportunity and connects each student to a larger, highly diverse community that respects his/her values and beliefs.
The purpose of our Physical Education program is to educate through human movement. Physical education is an integral part of the total education experience that contributes to the development of each child's mental, social and physical well-being. The children are supported and encouraged to take risks, solve problems and express themselves through movement. Children also gain knowledge and acquire an appreciation of good physical condition and fitness for a lifetime.

Children will gain knowledge and skills in the areas of how and why one moves, moving skillfully and effectively, cooperation, self-expression and confidence. Children are guided through individual and group exercises, problem-solving, use of manipulatives, games, rhythmic and movement activities. The physical education program assists in developing such skills as perceptual motor awareness, muscular strength, cardiovascular endurance and flexibility.

Stage II students attend PE with their learning group once in the six-day schedule for 40 minutes. Individual skill and fitness work is the focus of these class periods.

Additionally, each class has a 45-minute “Class PE”. Skills that are being worked in during their learning group time are incorporated into group activities and games.

Free Choice is offered in both morning and afternoon free choice slots. Children have opportunities for personal choice time, and a variety of games are played as well.
If children are guided through relevant experiences, empowered by their questioning and allowed to explore their world, they grow in power to feel, think and act in independent and responsible ways. Through the Stage II science program, children are helped to bring to consciousness that which they are experiencing, to link learning and to turn activity into deeper meanings through analysis and interpretation.

Children learn best when they are encouraged to ask questions, generate and test ideas, evaluate and create. In this way they are introduced to the scientific method. By using these processes, children can strengthen and deepen their reasoning abilities and become self-motivated, independent learners and active, concerned participants in society.

It is believed that children of this age understand best when they are encountering the concrete rather than the abstract. For this reason science in Stage II confronts what is real to the child. Concepts develop from hands-on activities and skills such as observation, measurement, problem solving, making predictions, classification and drawing conclusions grow stronger.

The Stage II science program strives to create an interest and enthusiasm for science among the students. A major goal is to introduce and utilize the scientific method and to provide experiences in utilizing it. Use of this approach helps develop critical thinking skills which enable students to excel in their acquisition of scientific knowledge.

A second goal is to build a positive attitude about science. Inquiry and risk taking are encouraged. A third goal is to help develop a concern and care for the environment and a respect for living things.
LANGUAGES

FRENCH

As a language spoken by 27 nations on four continents, French is widely recognized as a strong second language across the globe. French has a long tradition here at The Roeper School. It is the language chosen by Annemarie and George for the students to study at our school.

Learning any second language takes several years. The students at Roeper have an opportunity to embark on this fun adventure early on. During their voyage in Stage II French the children acquire oral and written comprehension of vocabulary through games, skits, storytelling, authentic songs and nursery rhymes. As they gain confidence and comfort, the Stage II children are always encouraged in their effort to speak. The activities in class are structured to advance their speaking skills and comprehension.

The use of storytelling in French classes exposes students to high-frequency vocabulary in an authentic, meaningful and engaging context. As they learn and play with stories, students inductively learn grammar structure and syntax.

The use of gestures helps with comprehension and language acquisition by involving multi-sensory input, which appeals to multiple learning styles and both sides of the brain. Students hear, see and feel the language while speaking it.

Games are used frequently in classes to give all students a chance to practice new vocabulary, grammar and conversations in a low-risk and fun setting.

At the end of Stage II the children are ready to further their study.

SPANISH

Spanish is now a part of the Stage II program, and we are so excited to expose our students to one of the most widely spoken languages in the world!

In Stage II Spanish classes we use an experiential approach, integrating stories, drama, games and music into language learning in classes primarily conducted in the target language, with the goal of giving our students an exposure to the language as well as an understanding and appreciation of other cultures in a comfortable and positive atmosphere.

"Children new to [a language] find in a story context for understanding. Through storytelling, how quickly they enter the activity, making sense of what is happening, building their own versions, listening, telling, retelling, talking about, reflecting upon — responding."

— David Bond & Bob Barton (1990)

The use of collaborative storytelling in Spanish class exposes students to high-frequency language in an authentic, meaningful and engaging context. As we create and play with out stories, students inductively learn grammar structure and syntax. Games are used frequently in classes to give students a chance to practice the language in a low-risk and fun setting.
The music program for Stage II children is based on an understanding of the developmental characteristics of the young child, beginning with the child’s natural instrument, his/her voice. Our music curriculum includes opportunities for three means of interaction with music: performing, creating and analytical listening. These three types of interactions encourage students to enter into problem-solving situations, an effective tool for learning musical skills. Our learning centers around the elements of music: melody, rhythm, texture, color, form and harmony.

Though Stage II music class is not a choir or a performing ensemble, the students are constantly singing, playing instruments and dancing in front of each other. This type of “performance” allows the children to engage in enjoyable musical experiences while developing their musical abilities.

Class music assists and encourages students in developing the following musical abilities:

Singing in tune individually and within a group, as well as developing a vocally healthy singing style.

Progression of rhythmic development from sense of steady beat to the ability to internalize rhythm patterns for use as accompaniment to simple songs and chants.

Improved listening skills through aural musical directions, listening to self and others in performing and directed listening experiences utilizing music of many cultures, styles and times.

Expression of musical skills in a variety of ways: singing, dance and movement, use of instruments, beginning music reading and creating/“composing”.

Music cognition experts tell us that the development of musical understanding needs creative experiences as well as the listening and performing aspects of music education. Creating music in the classroom plays a large role in applying musical concepts and accessing musical understanding. The focus is on process, not the product. These creative experiences are important for students in their development as independent learners.

Analytical listening offers students the opportunities to communicate their understanding of music they hear through: iconic representations, gesture, dancing, movement and verbal description. Listening to musical works in the class setting is essential when teaching musical elements. Students who participate in analytical listening, creating and performing as part of their musical experiences in class music learn more, understand more and become better musicians.

When music decision-making and evaluation of the decision-making are part of the music class, the students also become better musicians. A better musician means learning musical understanding and competence. Empowering students with musical understanding and independence is what music education is about.
LIBRARY
Stage II students may elect to come to Library Free Choice, which is held in the former library space in the Domes. Activities may include read-alouds, crafts, using online publishing tools, playing literature-based games, genre studies, learning about the history of books and reading, exploring students’ interests, and much more. Library Free Choice aims to awaken and deepen students’ love of the library through beautifully illustrated stories, intellectually challenging information, and opportunities for creative expression.

MUSIC
This class integrates the musical elements of rhythm, melody/harmony, texture, form and color through songs, instruments and movement. Children will also explore the world of music by creating with their voices, using instruments and movement. Often the free choice offerings present opportunities to explore concepts in further depth, enhancing understandings in Class Music.

ART
Free Choice is an integral part of Stage II Art. It is an elective program, and the offerings are rich in their diversity. A wide range of media and subjects are explored in an atmosphere of discovery, exploration and experimentation. Children are instructed and guided but find their own solutions to art challenges. Often shaped by the passions and interests of the children our activities foster cognitive and creative skills that pave the way for other areas of the curricula.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION
Physical Education Free Choice offers children opportunities to explore areas of individual interest, practice skills, work cooperatively with others and play games. Each free choice period begins with personal choice time (PCT) where children choose what equipment they’d like to use. The children enjoy creating their own fun and games during this time. After we clean up, a group activity or game occurs. During some of our afternoon Free Choice, we have opportunities to participate with our Stage III and IV students as they mentor our Stage II children during our Leadership in P.E. class. Stage III and IV students plan and present activities and games for Stage II students. Two teachers work with the students during these classes.

WOODS WALK
Being outside in nature is an integral part of the Stage II program. This outdoor activity involves observing nature and having fun in the Roeper Woods. Students hike along the path that runs next to the creek and talk about what they see or hear on the ground, in the trees, and in the creek. The adventure may end up in a variety of locations including Tire Mountain, St. Hugo or the Stage II playground. By the time we return to the Domes, and increased appreciation for nature and the “hidden” parts of our campus has been obtained.