

Mancos Middle School Explores

*"Two roads diverged in a wood, and I -
I took the one less traveled by, and that
has made all the difference
Robert Frost*

Foreward



Hello Blue Jay families,

As part of our continuous efforts to improve the quality of our Mancos students' educational experience, we spent a great deal of time over the last year evaluating our "elective" courses and our process for scheduling and delivering them. What you will see throughout this publication are the results of that thoughtful evaluation and revision process.

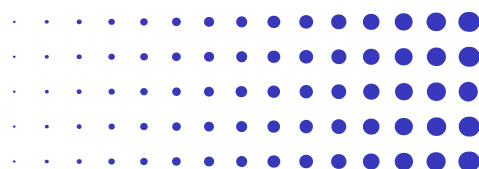
One of the key findings that led to the revisions of what we will be calling our *Exploratory Courses* were that some students, over the course of their middle school journey, were repeating several elective courses, and not getting the opportunity to experience *all* of the enrichment classes that our incredible middle school teachers offer. We also realized that the term *elective* was not accurate, as often times a student would not be able to get the courses that they chose.

As a small, rural school with limited staff, we are simply not able to honor all of the choices students may have, and in the past, this meant that some students would have taken an elective course more than once, and not taken other courses at all. We want to provide our students with the opportunity to explore a multitude of learning experiences, discover areas of interest that they do not yet know they may have passion for or aptitude in, and enter high school with a better understanding of what their future pursuits may be.

As an additional benefit, this revised system will allow students, parents, and teachers to know what exploratory courses will be taken well in advance. Incoming 6th grade families will get to see what their child will be taking throughout their entire middle school journey. Change is not always easy, and we are confident that this change is an important one that was given a lot of thought and discussion with the student experience as the priority.

Please take a close look at the wonderful work that Ms. Alice Miller has put into this publication, and you will find that it will answer most, if not all the questions you may have.

Sincerely,
Ed Whritner



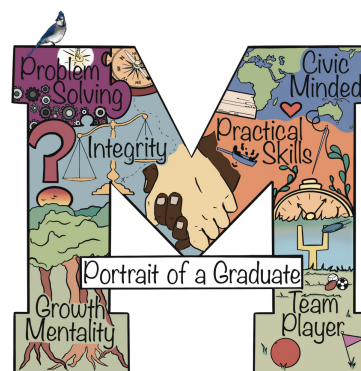
Why have exploratory subjects?

We aim to offer a range of subjects to our students, as an opportunity to try new things that they may not otherwise get to. We aim to broaden their perspective, stretch their thinking, perhaps find an interest that is a lifelong hobby or future career path. By dabbling in a variety of subjects, students will be able to gain better insights about themselves and finding their passions.

Challenge and disruption is how we *grow* and *improve*.

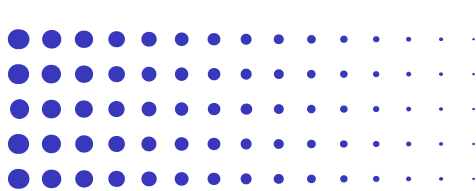
What are the responsibilities of our students?

- Be respectful, be responsible, be ready!
- Have a positive and supportive attitude
- Be curious
- Try new things
- Growth mentality
- Integrity
- Team player
- Problem solver
- Civic minded
- Practical skills



What do we expect from families?

- Supporting your student(s) in trying new things
- Building resilience
- Asking questions about what they are learning
- Doing hard things

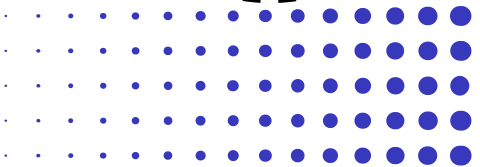


Mixed Grade Classes - Morning *

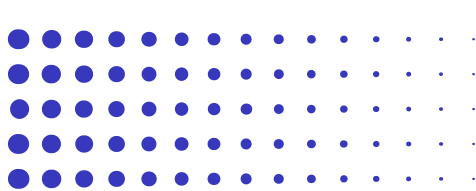
Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4
Art Band Strength & Conditioning Keyboarding Intro to Robotics Shop	Art Band Health Keyboarding Science Fair Shop	Art Band Drama Health PBIS Leadership Intro to Robotics Shop	Art Band Drama Strength & Conditioning Advanced Robotics Shop

Mixed Grade Classes - Afternoon *

Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4
Outdoor Education Farmstand Where in the World? Career Exploration Life Lab Physical Education Intro to ASL	Community Connections Hunting Stress Management Career Exploration Life Lab Physical Education Intro to ASL	Academy Debate Self Improvement Sustainability Career Exploration Life Lab Physical Education Intro to ASL	Academy World Cultures Money, Money, Money Lab Skills Career Exploration Life Lab Physical Education Intro to ASL



**Classes are based on teacher availability and subject to change*



Grade Specific

6th - Keyboarding / any new 6th, 7th, or 8th grade student

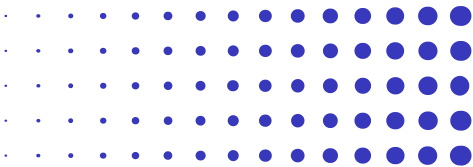
Keyboarding skills hold immense importance as they serve as a foundational component for academic success and future professional endeavors. In an era dominated by digital communication and technology, proficiency in keyboarding equips students with a practical and essential skill set. Developing efficient typing skills at this stage not only enhances students' ability to express their thoughts and ideas fluently but also facilitates seamless engagement with educational resources and assignments. As students progress through their academic journey, the mastery of keyboarding becomes increasingly crucial, laying the groundwork for efficient note-taking, collaborative projects, and the completion of assignments. Moreover, the cultivation of these skills fosters adaptability and prepares students for the evolving demands of the digital age, ensuring they are well-equipped for success in both academic and professional settings.

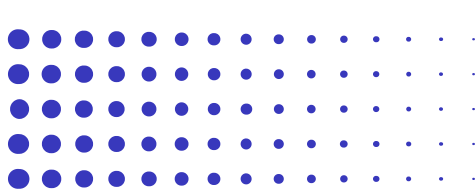
7th - Health / any new 7th or 8th grade student

This class is mostly discussion based class with 2 projects that are completed during the 8 weeks quarter. One called the "Spotlight Project" where students learn about themselves, their relationships, and the people and things that are most important to them that determines their overall wellness as an individual now and in the future. The second project includes their choice of topic related to health - drug use, addiction, mental health, overall health, etc. These are a group or individual project that are presented to the class to teach what they have researched on the topic. The discussion portion - and some classwork, is based on the subjects of healthy eating and nutrition, personal safety and injury prevention, substance abuse, addictions and related behaviors, mental health, human development, the effects of adolescence, puberty, and introduction to the reproduction system.

8th - Career Explorations

In this career explorations class, students delve into diverse professions that have piqued their curiosity and interest. This exploration proves invaluable, offering students firsthand insights into the daily workings, challenges, and rewards within their chosen industries. By engaging in this hands-on experience, students not only gain a deeper understanding of potential career paths but also develop a clearer sense of their own passions and aspirations. This practical exposure serves as a crucial stepping stone for informed decision-making as they navigate their academic and professional journeys, empowering them to make well-informed choices about their future careers.





Mixed Grade Classes

Academy

An opportunity for independent study through a project in the area of individual personal passion. Students will build on the fundamental skills learned in their core content classes through research and application

Art

From an article published online from Arts Academy in the Woods -
“Educators and researchers alike recognize that working in the arts helps students to develop creative problem-solving skills. It also helps middle-school-aged children continue to develop their motor, language, and social skills. Art requires students to invent, make decisions, and take risks. It requires critical thinking. These are all essential skills that will help them as they enter high school and then move into adulthood. Through art, young teens learn to be more careful and thorough in the ways they observe the world.”

Band

Music is another language and helps students think and learn differently. Music helps boost memory, develops social skills, teamwork and collaboration. Music transcends academic barriers, as well as language and ethnicity. It promotes higher order thinking, mathematics and developing sensory awareness. It is a vital subject in a well rounded curriculum.

Community Connections

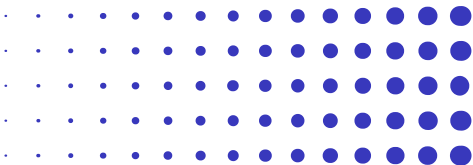
This is an opportunity for students to be active participants in Mancos! Students will create projects that benefit their family, school and community in order to better understand the benefits of collaboration and connection.

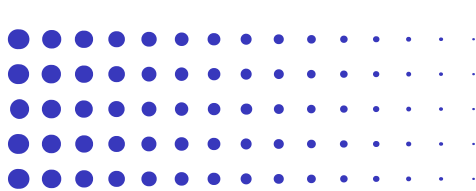
Debate

Take a closer look on environmental, community, and world events by learning to argue a point of view that's research-based. Debate is a great way to expand our ideas, offer constructive feedback and learn from our peers.

Drama

This course is designed for students with little or no theatre experience, and promotes enjoyment and appreciation for all aspects of theatre. Classwork focuses on the exploration of theatre literature, performance, historical and cultural connections, and technical requirements. Improvisation, creative dramatics, and beginning scene work are used to introduce students to acting and character development. Students will be acting or working with technical requirements in a play each quarter.





Mixed Grade Classes

Electricity and Magnetism

Electricity and magnetism are like dynamic duos in the world of science, and understanding them can be a powerful experience! Imagine electricity as the zippy energy that flows through wires, powering everything from your phone to cool gadgets. Now, magnets have a superpower too – they can attract or push away things. But here's the cool part: when electricity and magnets team up, amazing things happen!

Hunting

We will not be hunting or using weapons in this elective! Rather, we will be learning about the history of hunting in our nation, how hunting regulations in our country compare with other countries, how hunting affects communities, and how hunters impact our public lands. This elective will include guest speakers and field trips.

Introduction to American Sign Language & Culture

A system of communication using visual gestures and signs, as used by deaf people. With signing, the brain processes linguistic information through the eyes. The shape, placement, and movement of the hands, as well as facial expressions and body movements, all play important parts in conveying information.

Lab Skills

This journey involves honing essential skills, such as safety practices, the art of manipulating glassware, precision in weighing, mastering distillation techniques, and even exploring the world of advanced microscopy. Get ready to step into the laboratory, where these hands-on skills will not only broaden your scientific knowledge but also empower you to conduct experiments with confidence and precision. Safety first, curiosity next – it's time to unlock the wonders of science through practical exploration!

Life Lab

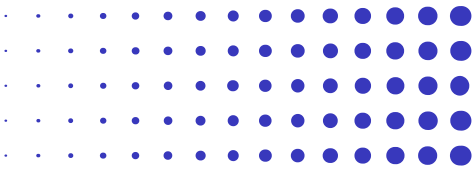
Students will learn and practice basic life skills related to home and personal care, life management and organization, student specific, professional, transportation, and general conscientiousness.

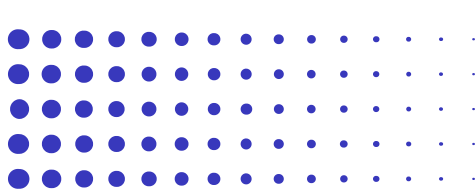
Money Money Money

If you're thinking of getting a job this summer, or just interested in money, this is the class for you. We'll cover everything from applying for a job, opening a bank account, credit and debit cards, getting a car loan, and how to invest money in the stock market.

Outdoor Education

Survival skills look easy on TV, but what do we REALLY know about using a compass, making bark rope, tracking animals and water purification? Learn basic survival skills and the symbiotic relationship we have with nature.





Mixed Grade Classes

PBIS Leadership

This class will also come up with PBIS rewards and be involved in the Bluejay Bank process and running Snack Shack. Students will update the school PBIS matrix as needed. Student will be in charge of cutting, making, collecting, and distributing Bluejay Bucks.

Physical Education

Help students explore, personalize, and adopt healthy behaviors. Students will learn, practice, and apply skills that will assist students in making choices necessary to lead an active and healthy lifestyle. Students will acquire skills in the following domains: nutrition, self-management, planning and goal setting, stress management, relationship management, decision making, communication, and advocacy.

Robotics

Beginning - Learn the basics of programming and building robots using Vex Robotics parts. Students will learn how to build a moving robot, how gear ratios work, and how sensors allow the robot to interpret its surroundings. They will build robots that solve mazes, drive fast, push other robots, change directions when hit and collect items.

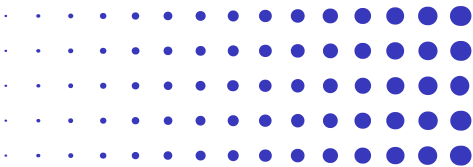
Advanced - build upon what you have learned in beginning robotics

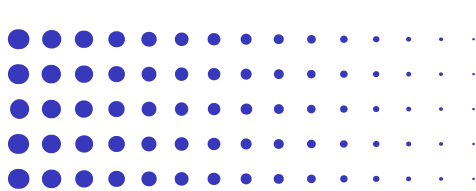
Self Improvement

In this class you'll learn to set goals for yourself, to develop healthy habits, research inspiring people, and do body-weight exercises (no free weights in this class).

Science Fair

Students will use the scientific method to complete a science fair project. They will do research, form a question and hypothesis, write a procedure and then collect and analyze their data and finally write a conclusion. They will also write a research paper about their projects. All of this will be presented and judged at our local science fair giving students a chance to qualify for the regional science fair in Durango.





Mixed Grade Classes

Shop

Introduction to shop class builds life skills. Students learn tool usage and safety, whilst building small projects.

Strength & Conditioning

Get ready for an exciting adventure in our fitness course! Middle school students will dive into energetic workouts that include heart-pumping cardio exercises and strength training. Brace yourselves for lots of running and weightlifting – it's all about having fun while getting fit and strong! Get ready to break a sweat and discover the awesome benefits of staying active.

Stress Management

Learn about brain chemistry and tips to handle stress including yoga one day a week (or more if it goes over), short meditations, learn about the impacts of color and screen time and music on moods, talk about addictions, and just take some time to learn other activities that help you relax.

Sustainability

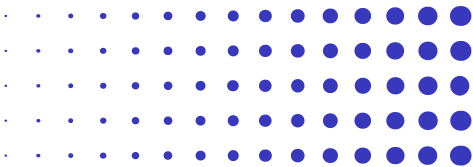
Do you like nature? Have you ever wondered what you could do to make sure that people in the future can also enjoy nature? Explore these questions and much more in this course while gaining real-world skills!

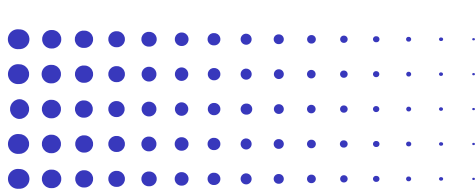
Where in the World

Embark on a fascinating journey as we explore unique people and places around the world! From extraordinary cultures to awe-inspiring landscapes, this adventure will open your eyes to the incredible diversity our planet holds. Discover amazing stories of individuals who've made a mark in their communities and learn about places that will ignite your curiosity. Get ready to broaden your perspective and be inspired by the extraordinary tapestry of our global community. Let the exploration begin!

World Cultures

Come explore different countries and plan a trip of a lifetime! We will explore different cultures, currency, economics, holidays, and languages while planning our dream vacation anywhere in the world!





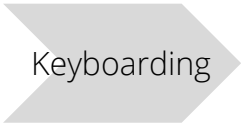
Flowchart

Student entering 6th grade

Year 1

Morning exploratory subject

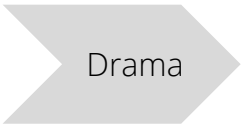
Quarter 1



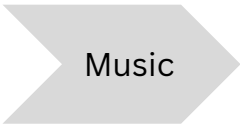
Quarter 2



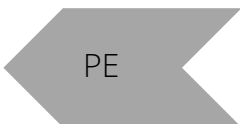
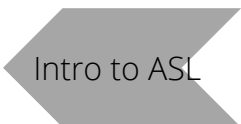
Quarter 3



Quarter 4



Afternoon exploratory subject



Year 2

Morning exploratory subject

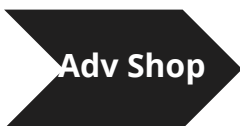


Afternoon exploratory subject



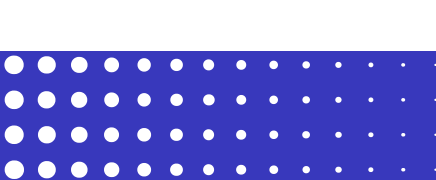
Year 3

Morning exploratory subject



Afternoon exploratory subject





***“Education is the key to unlocking the
world, a passport to freedom”
Oprah Winfrey***

