NAWA ACADEMY

Curriculum Guide

2009 - 2010

Accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges

National Association of Independent Schools • Small Boarding School Association

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"The road to success is always under construction." -Lily Tomlin

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Only those who risk going too far will ever know how far they can go.

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"The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams." -Eleanor Roosevelt


Introduction - Academics

What is our philosophy of education?

The administrators, faculty and staff at Nawa Academy practice the proverb, "I heard and I forgot. I saw and I remembered. I did and I understood." In support of this claim, John Dewey, the famous progressive educator of the late 19th century and early 20th century, once said that the term "experiential education" is redundant, for in order to learn, we need to experience what we are studying. Quoting Mr. Dewey, "Experiential education is education, pure and simple."

The faculty at Nawa Academy have created unique programs to meet the needs of our students: International Academy, California Academy, and Snowboard USA. In these experiential-based programs, we integrate the head, hands, and heart.

What type of education is received?

Nawa Academy is designed for students who desire an alternative approach to learning. Through an active, hands-on curriculum, students realize a multi-dimensional learning environment, where concepts are connected with tangible real-life applications.

Nawa Academy follows the guidelines and standards for the California State Curriculum. Students who graduate from Nawa Academy at the College Preparatory level are prepared for the demands of a college or university, and have developed the skills necessary to adapt to the many changes in society. Students who graduate on the Standard track will have the tools to excel in the increasingly demanding and technical work force. Students develop a solid foundation in writing research papers, interfacing with technology, and creating educational projects.

With innovative academic instructors, the students receive a dynamic, quality education. It is Nawa Academy's goal to create an environment for learning that will challenge students and show them that learning is not one dimensional, but rather a rewarding lifelong experience.

What is an outcome-based education?

Following the belief that education is not only a product, but also a process, Nawa Academy has adopted an outcome-based approach to learning. Outcome-based education is designed to educate the whole child and to give each learner the maximum opportunity to prepare for a successful future in a changing global society. The underlying beliefs and principals of outcome-based education create a flexible approach to instruction that recognizes and responds to the changing educational and social needs of today's children.

Nawa Academy's learner-centered, results-oriented instructional strategy enhances the probability of success for every learner. Our approach to education accommodates each student's needs through multiple instructional strategies and diverse assessment techniques. Our aim is to create conditions and learning experiences that will help all students realize their full potential.

SETTING GOALS

How are outcomes achieved?

The faculty at Nawa Academy have developed courses which have outcomes that clearly identify what a student is to learn. Projects are an integral part of the learning process as students are expected to apply skills they learn in experiential (hands-on) ways. Achieving academic outcomes is done in two ways: project and skills work time.

In project work time, students apply the skills they learn. For example, to meet a language arts or social studies requirement, a student might create a newsletter including the history of a favorite town or era, while also covering stories at Nawa Academy; a math or science project might introduce students to engineering through construction of a hover-craft. Project work time is an integral part of the learning process as students apply their knowledge to create multidimensional projects.

Academics

Skills work time is designed for students to obtain the knowledge necessary to successfully complete the projects. This allows students to be focused on meeting outcomes by using textbooks and other resources, working with peers, and/or working one-on-one with the teacher. Skills work time takes a more traditional approach to the learning process.

What are the academic blocks?

The school year is divided into four academic blocks. Students in the California Academy and Snowboard USA programs focus on their core courses in language arts and mathematics during the first and third blocks, and their core courses in science and social studies in the second and fourth blocks. Students are required to complete work towards half of the outcomes of a course in one block. Exceptions to this are Geography, Health, Economics and U.S. Government where students must complete all the outcomes in one block. At the end of a block they will have completed a half-year (one semester) of study. Additionally, students will take up to two electives each block.

To maximize the unique learning opportunities offered in the International Academy (travel program), these students utilize the two semester system rather than four academic blocks. The academic flow in the International Academy program is therefore different than our other programs.

To further maximize the learning in the International Academy, the academic focus shifts from math and science subjects while on campus to language arts, social studies, and foreign language subjects while traveling into other countries. Their time on campus during the school year accounts for about half of the academic year, while their travel accounts for the other half. Each trip lasts 12 to 16 days.

Is vocational education offered?

Regardless of the educational track, students have the opportunity to learn vocational skills in a variety of disciplines. Students who take a vocational elective course often discover that the outcomes and concepts are often connected with academic courses they are taking. Please note that many universities and colleges will not calculate the vocational grade into the total grade point average. However, Nawa Academy feels strongly that vocational courses are important to a student's overall educational development.

What are Nawa Academy's graduation requirements?

Nawa Academy's course and graduation requirements are very similar to those in most California public schools. For more information, refer to page 5 (Nawa Courses and Graduation Requirements).

Grade 7 & 8 Curriculum

Students at the Junior High (Middle School) level study English, Math, Science, and Social Studies. Students take a minimum of one elective course each block.

A few final words...

Students enrolled at Nawa Academy are offered a highly individualized, well-rounded, and meaningful education. Whether they enter a university or the working world, students leaving Nawa Academy will have been exposed to a myriad of challenging experiences.

Education Principles

Our vision to guide instruction, learning and the school environment

1. Teachers are familiar with, apply and stay current with various learning theories in the teaching profession.

2. A comfortable learning environment exists where students feel respected, accepted, supported and have open lines of communication with peers and teachers.

3. The education is truly interactive and is approached as a process, not an event. Students acquire skills through practice and experience. This approach allows faculty and staff the flexibility to help a student continue to develop skills until a project, assignment, or learning objective is completed to the best of a student's ability. Work that is not reflective of a student's best effort or work that is below assignment expectations may be considered incomplete.

4. Students are self-directed and responsible for learning. The teacher is a guide in the process of academic growth, personal growth and self-discovery.

5. The learning process cultivates interest, enthusiasm and curiosity, while inspiring creativity, lifelong learning and a desire to know more.

6. Students develop leadership skills and responsibility by taking an active role in the school community.

7. Students continuously improve in respecting themselves, respecting others and demonstrating positive behaviors as citizens in a global community.

8. Wilderness and other experiences are integrated into aspects of learning and character development in order to promote self-esteem and make learning meaningful and fun.

9. Students apply skills and knowledge to the real world.

10. Teachers set and expect student growth in meeting high academic standards.

Outcome Sample:

Advanced Earth Science

To better explain the outcomes system, we have included this class as an example.

Outcome #1: Students will study and have an understanding of how the Earth developed. They will understand plate tectonics, faults, and volcanoes.

Outcome #2: Students will learn how the earth is constantly changing. They will understand earthquakes, erosion, and the force of moving water.

Outcome #3: Students will learn about rocks and minerals. They will learn about igneous, sedimentary and metamorphic rocks and how they change from one type to another.

Outcome #4: Students will learn about the earth's natural resources. These include gas, oil, coal, water, and trees.

Outcome #5: Students will learn about recycling.

Outcome #6: Students will learn about the atmosphere and how it affects our weather and climate.

Outcome #7: Students will learn about the weather and climates of the United States and how weather is predicted.

Outcome #8: Students will learn how the same water is used multiple times.

Outcome #9: Students will learn oceanography. They will study the oceans, its resources, and how the oceans are explored.

Outcome #10: Students will understand that the Earth is part of the Solar System, and that the Solar System is part of the Universe. They will be able to define planets, stars, moons, asteroids and comets.

Outcome #11: Students will research how a pollution problem has been solved. For example, how Lake Erie was returned to usable water. This can be presented in a paper, poster, or display.

Outcome #12: Students will set up a recycling station and maintain it.

High School Courses and Graduation Requirements

Subject Area	Credits Required		Courses Offered
	Col. Prep.	Standard	
Language Arts	40	40	English 9; English 10; English 11; English 12
Mathematics	30	20	Pre-Algebra; Algebra I; Geometry; Algebra II; Trigonometry; Pre-Calculus; Math for Life
Science	30	20	Earth Science; Biology; Chemistry; Physics
Social Studies	35	35	Geography; World History; US History; US Government; Economics
Foriegn Language	10	10*	Spanish I, II, III
Visual/Fine Arts	10	10*	Subjects offered have included: Audio-Visual Production; History & Appreciation of Art; Drama; Film Studies; Visual & Performing Arts
Health	5	5	Health
Physical Education	20	20	PE credits are gained through successful completion of activities specific to each academic school program
Electives	50	80	Subjects offered have included : Anthropology; Auto Care & Costs; Creative Writing; Fire Technology; Food Service; Horticulture; Journalism; Life Skills; Man & the Environment; Metal Shop; Myths & Legends; Needles & Threads; Psychology; Plants & Civilization; World Cultures
TOTAL UNITS	230	230	

* Students following the Standard Curriculum require 10 credits in either a Foreign Language OR Fine/Visual Arts.

• The school year is measured in blocks. Successful completion of a block's work will lead to 5 credits. 10 credits represent a full year's course. All courses (with the exception of Geography; Health; Economics and US Government), are 2 block courses. Vocational courses are offered each block at the California Academy.

• The College Preparatory curriculum satisfies the requirements of the University of California and other colleges and universities. Please note that most state universities will not accept "D" grades. Students wishing to attend a state university must also fulfill specific elective area requirements.

• The Standard curriculum will meet entrance requirements for most two year colleges.

• Physical Education is a required course throughout the school year, regardless of whether the student has previously earned sufficient units for graduation.

Academic Expectations

Academic Assessment

Each students progress is based on their own demonstrated achievement and personal growth. Students are expected to make a constant effort to improve their level of performance until the end of a block even if they have met the minimum performance standards. At the end of each block students will receive a final letter grade based on their academic performance. All assigned coursework, projects, and papers are important aspects of the educational process. Incomplete assignments may result in an incomplete grade for the entire course, until all course work is completed.

SPS Scores in Class

Teachers submit a weekly SPS score for each student as part of the Student Privilege System. These scores are also used to track a student's effort and behavior during each block, and are taken into account when final grades are given. To learn more about the Student Privelege System, please refer to the Parent Manual or contact the Office of Admissions.

Score	Expectations
1	All weekly school work current with excellent effort and behavior consistently good.
2	All weekly school work current with good effort and good behavior.
3	Weekly school work usually current with average effort and/or behavior generally cooperative but inconsistent.
4	School work usually not current and/or effort sporadic and/or on Academic Probation and/or behavior needing constant staff attention.

Learning Laboratory

Teachers who feel a student might gain from additional academic services outside the classroom may recommend the on campus learning lab. Specialists in the learning lab test and evaluate students to determine if they will benefit from the one on one learning lab instruction. This initial evaluation is included in the basic tuition and respective parents will be notified of the results. An individualized program will be designed which will help develop enhanced visual processing, improve brain integration, increase the ability to focus, improve time management, and strengthen literary skills. A learning lab fee applies to each session for those who participate with parental/guardian permission. For additional information regarding this service, please contact the Office of Admissions for an information packet.