

# Peach Blossom School

## San Jose, CA

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~ *The World is Our Classroom* ~  
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### Course of Study Secondary Students

We believe that the family is the most fundamental social institution and the preferred means of caring for, preparing, and training children to be productive members of society. We promote and support a family-centered education.

Our education program, in which children learn primarily under the immediate direction, guidance, and support of their parents and other caring and involved adults, offers an outstanding educational opportunity by providing a natural learning environment, extensive real-world experience, flexibility of schedule, and the ability to respond to the specific needs and inclinations of the child. Each student's program is developmentally appropriate, integrated and fully individualized, and continually built upon student strengths and interests throughout the year.

**English:** Students will develop knowledge of, and appreciation for literature and the language, as well as the skills of speaking, reading, listening, spelling, handwriting, and composition.

Students will read from self-chosen or parent-chosen literature on a regular basis and will engage in reflection on those literature pieces in a variety of ways, such as: journal writing, book reviews, conversations, drama based on the books, book clubs. Our educational goal is for students to read for pleasure, to gain exposure to a wide variety of genres, and to be able to reflect critically on what they read.

Students will read content-related non-fiction materials to support their chosen areas of interest. They will reflect on these pieces in a variety of ways, such as: journal writing, writing articles for submission to magazines or newspapers, discussions, or development of a scrapbook in an area of interest. Our goal is for students to learn to read critically for information, to understand and be able to reflect on materials read, to be able to compare them to other sources of information, and to learn how and where to find written resources as needed.

**Writing, spelling and grammar** will be covered as part of students' natural writing processes. Students will develop their ability to write creatively, to write letters and lists, to create and write drama pieces, informational essays, persuasive articles, etc. Our goal is for students to enjoy writing, to gain expertise in both the writing process and in technical writing and editing skills, and to develop a sense of power over the written word.

**Science:** Students will develop their scientific knowledge with emphasis on basic concepts, theories, and processes of scientific investigation and on the place of humans in ecological systems, and with appropriate applications of the interrelation and interdependence of the sciences. These will be related to areas of special student interest by engaging in hands-on activities, watching science videos, reading related written materials, conducting scientific experiments, keeping journals, making and recording observations, visiting scientists in their work places, visiting local science museums, participating in science fairs and workshops, or through cooperative learning. Our goal is for students to experience a wide range of scientific exposure in their areas of interest, to develop a positive

interest in science, to learn to think scientifically, to develop a respect for the work scientists do, and to understand the importance science has in daily life.

**Social Studies:** Students will develop their understanding of the social sciences and humanities by reading and discussing fiction and non-fiction materials, participating in field trips to historic and politically or culturally significant sites, or through discussion and debate. Anthropology, economics, psychology, geography, history, political science, and sociology are fully integrated into the students studies in a wide variety of ways, such as: the use of time lines and maps, discussion, journal writing, cooking, plays, road trips, invention building, field trips, and art. Our goal is for students to develop a foundation for understanding the history, resources, development, and government of California and the United States of America; the American legal system; the operation of the juvenile and adult criminal justice systems and the rights and duties of citizens under the criminal and civil law and the State and Federal constitutions; the development of the American economic system including the role of the entrepreneur and labor; the relations of persons to their human and natural environment; eastern and western cultures and civilizations; human rights issues, with particular attention to the study of the inhumanity of genocide, slavery, and the Holocaust; and contemporary issues including the wise use of natural resources.

**Health and Physical Education:** Health and physical education will be fully integrated as a part of daily living skills and participation in the wider community. Students will learn to care for their health and physical environment in a variety of ways, such as: shopping for and preparing food, discussing the necessity of a healthy diet, participation in fire drills and other emergency preparedness activities, exercise both as play and as part of a structured group experience and through camping, hiking, and other outdoor activity. Our goal is for students to appreciate the necessity of a healthy body and to develop lifelong habits of regular exercise and good nutrition.

**Applied Arts and Vocation/Technical Education:** Consumer and homemaker education, industrial arts, general business education, and general agriculture will be offered in a variety of ways. Students' interests will determine the direction of their applied arts and vocation projects, which may include apprenticeships, mentorships, or specific training. Our goal is for students to develop skills and knowledge to meet their own future vocational and avocational requirements.

**Visual and Performing Arts:** Students will develop their knowledge of art, music, and drama through informal and structured methods in a variety of ways, such as: art classes, instrumental lessons, choral singing, listening to various styles of music, learning about the people who have influenced music through history, or working on individualized or group projects that relate to music, art, and drama, including acting and performing in a variety of venues and genres. Our goal is for students to enjoy a wide variety of art, music, and drama experiences, including performance, while developing an understanding and appreciation of the importance of art, music, and drama as creative expressions of human life experiences.

**Mathematics:** Students will develop mathematical concepts, operational skills, and problem solving through participation in daily real-world activities such as cooking, building, shopping, budgeting, computing, etc. Mathematics materials will be chosen to support students' individual learning styles in order to achieve competency in operational skills and insight into problem-solving procedures. Our goal is for students to gain a strong conceptual knowledge of mathematics as well as an appreciation for the daily applications of mathematics in their lives.

**Automobile Driver Education:** Students will be offered the opportunity to develop the knowledge and skills necessary to become safe drivers.

**Foreign Language:** Students will have the opportunity to develop understanding, speaking, reading, and writing skills in a foreign language of their choice.

**Parenting Skills:** Students will acquire parenting skills primarily through first-hand interaction with, and observation of, young children and through direct adult instruction in skills and knowledge including: effective parenting, prevention of child abuse, nutrition, household finances and budgeting, personal and family interactions and relations, methods to promote self-esteem, effective decision-making skills, family and individual health, child growth and development, parental responsibilities, personal hygiene, maintenance of healthy relationships, and teen-parenting issues.