

Elementary Related Arts

Art

The West Allegheny Visual Arts Curriculum reflects the philosophy advocated by the National Art Education Association (NAEA) and the PA Art Education Association (PAEA) and is aligned with the [National Standards for Arts Education and the PA Academic Standards for Arts & Humanities.](#)

A student enrolled in Visual Arts in kindergarten through grade 5 will have the opportunity to develop a comprehensive visual arts background through the academic study of and active participation in art. Art is an active form of doing and knowing, a means of expression and communication that celebrates the human spirit. Art can be used to explore, question, define and develop a sense of self. Arts education provides the opportunity for students to learn to visually express a vast range of feelings, ideas and emotions, conveying what cannot be expressed in any other form of representation. Art education is a unifying force that embraces interdisciplinary connections. However, while the visual arts are interconnected with all disciplines, it is a discreet discipline in and of itself. Learning art is both sequential and substantive. Study of the visual arts benefits the whole child, developing many kinds of literacy, creativity and intelligences while merging reasoning, imagination and dexterity into unique forms of self-expression and communication. The visual arts connect person and experience, verbal to nonverbal, logical to emotional, all resulting in maximizing comprehension and a deeper understanding of the whole.

Music

The West Allegheny General Music Curriculum reflects the philosophy advocated by the National Association for Music Education and the PA Music Educators Association (PMEA) and is aligned with the [National Standards for Arts Education and the PA Academic Standards for Arts & Humanities](#).

A student enrolled in General Music in kindergarten through fifth grade will have the opportunity to develop a comprehensive musical background through the academic study of and active participation in music. Music is an active form of doing and knowing, a means of expression and communication that celebrates the human spirit. Music can be used to explore, question, define and develop a sense of self. Music education is a unifying force that embraces literacy, interdisciplinary connections and multicultural awareness.

Musical concepts must be learned through a multi-modal teaching process that directs the content at the cognitive, kinesthetic and affective domains to develop aesthetic sensitivity and response. Engaging the aural, visual and physical senses simultaneously or sequentially maximizes comprehension. The higher the level of musical concepts and skills developed by the student, the more intense and comprehensive the artistic experience. Music instruction also exercises linguistic, logical-mathematical and spatial modes of learning as its hands-on experiences reinforce ordering and retaining knowledge and higher-order thinking skills while applying both concrete and abstract concepts. Music study enables students to better objectify the subjective when possible while also fostering creativity. Technology infused throughout the music program provides students with opportunities to reinforce and apply musical concepts and skills.

The instrumental music program is available to participating students in grades 4 and 5 as they meet twice a rotation, once for a small group lesson and once for full band. Chorus is available to students in grade 5 as they meet once a rotation.

Physical Education

The West Allegheny School District Physical Education Curriculum reflects the philosophy advocated by the National Association for Physical Education (NASPE) and is aligned to the [PA Health, Safety, & Physical Education Standards](#). Physical education addresses the development of students' physical potential and their related social, emotional, and intellectual growth. Its primary purpose is to assist the learner in developing:

- total physical fitness and a desire to maintain it
- movement abilities ranging from functional life skills to those needed for successful participation in leisure activities
- safety awareness
- an appreciation and understanding of specific sports and dances

The mastery of these objectives promotes the development of wellness skills, which enable students to lead full, productive, and healthy lives.

Movement, physical activity, and exercise enhance the learning state for memory retention and retrieval. As such, physical activity is a catalyst for learning in all content areas and should be an essential element of students' daily routines.

Computer, Innovation, and Design

Students learn not only computer technology but have more opportunities for project-based learning, pre-engineering/design challenges that incorporate science, technology, and mathematics (STEM). Students use hands-on materials in addition to technology for creative and innovative projects fostering 21st century skills: critical thinking, collaboration, communication, creativity, and innovation.

Students in grades K-5 have CID built within their schedules. Sample units students may engage in include Lego Robotics, Scratch programming, and Makey Makey. Additionally, 4th and 5th grade utilize some Project Lead the Way lessons (<https://www.pltw.org/our-programs/pltw-launch>) which focus on collaborative problem solving with a structured approach, like the engineering design process while learning that it is OK to take risks and make mistakes.

Library Science

The West Allegheny Library Science Curriculum reflects the philosophy advocated by the American Association of School Librarians (AASL) and is aligned with the *Standards for the 21st Century Learner*.

The curriculum supports the common beliefs directly quoted and outlined in the *Standards for the 21st Century Learner*:

- School libraries are essential to the development of learning skills. School libraries provide equitable physical and intellectual access to the resources and tools required for learning in a warm, stimulating, and safe environment. School librarians collaborate with others to provide instruction, learning strategies, and practice in using the essential learning skills needed in the 21st century.
- Reading is a window to the world. Reading is a foundational skill for learning, personal growth, and enjoyment. The degree to which students can read and understand text in all formats in all contexts is a key indicator of success in school and life. As a lifelong learning skill, reading goes beyond decoding and comprehension to interpretation and development of new understanding.
- Inquiry provides a framework for learning. To become an independent learner, students must gain not only the skills but also the disposition to those skills, along with an understanding of their own responsibilities and self-assessment strategies. Combined, these four elements build a learner who can thrive in a complex information environment.
- Ethical behavior in the use of information must be taught. In this increasingly global world of information, students must be taught to seek diverse perspectives, gather and use information ethically, and use social tools responsibly and safely.
- Technology skills are crucial for future employment needs. Today's students need to develop information skills that will enable them to use technology as an important tool for learning, both now and in the future.
- Equitable access is a key component of education. All children deserve equitable access to books and reading, to information, and to information technology in an environment that is safe and conducive to learning.
- The definition of information literacy has become more complex as resources and technologies have changed. Information literacy has progressed from the simple definition of using reference resources to find information. Multiple literacies, including digital, visual, textual, and technological have now joined information literacy as crucial skills for this century.
- The continuing expansion of information demands that all individuals acquire the thinking skills that will enable them to learn on their own. The amount of information available to our learners necessitates that each individual acquires the skills to select, evaluate, and use information appropriately and effectively.
- Learning has a social context. Learning is enhanced by opportunities to share and learn with others. Students need to develop skills in sharing knowledge and learning with others, both in face-to-face situations and through technology.

The West Allegheny School librarians achieve these common beliefs through collaboration with the students, teachers, parents, administration, neighborhood and educational community

worldwide to develop integrated units of study that support and extend the curriculum and meet individual needs. They demonstrate leadership and expertise in acquiring and evaluating resources, promoting library programs and activities as well as managing administrative tasks. The District librarians provide instructions to foster competence and to stimulate interest in reading, viewing, and using information and ideas.