



## *Curriculum Guide*

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# Introduction

**A Personal Approach** – At Whetstone Academy, each student has his own Individual Academic Plan designed personally for him. Staff members base his plan upon his outcomes from a wide range of assessments that test academic progress. They consider his personal academic history, his individual strengths and weaknesses, and his personal learning style.

## Mission Statement

*Whetstone's mission as a small therapeutic boarding school is to guide young men in establishing a secure BASE (behavioral, academic, social, and emotional skills) with an emphasis on relationships in a farm-centered environment.*

## School Philosophy

**Education of the "Whole Child"** - The Academy's educational philosophy is the development of the whole person: socially and emotionally as well as academically. For this reason academic and clinical staff members work closely together and discuss each student's progress. Our philosophy is supported by our small 6:1 - student to teacher ratio, individualized learning plan (ILP) and individualized support/instruction as necessary.

## Academic Services offered at Whetstone Academy:

- Group teacher-directed instruction
- Specialized Tutoring and/or Individualized Instruction
- Individualized Academic Plan
- Computer Assisted Technology
- Speech Therapist (SLP) \*
- Occupational Therapy \*
- qEEG and Neurofeedback\*

\* additional cost

## Technology

In addition to our STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics) Curriculum, Whetstone students use Chrome books and Google Classroom. This technology is limited to supervised classroom use

only. Students can use this technology for collaboration and as assistive technology for learning differences.

## Academics & Extra-Curricular Activities

This section explains the goals, philosophies, and policies of the Academics and Activities at Whetstone Academy. This includes: School philosophy, athletics, community/social, adventure, and fine arts.

### Developing Eight Kinds of Intelligence

The Academy recognizes Harvard professor Howard Gardner's work that human intelligence is multi-dimensional and that teachers can develop lessons for each of the following:

- Linguistic Intelligence ("word smart")
- Logical-Mathematical Intelligence ("number/reasoning smart")
- Spatial Intelligence ("picture smart")
- Bodily- Intelligence ("body smart")
- Musical Intelligence ("music smart")
- Interpersonal Intelligence ("people smart")
- Intrapersonal Intelligence ("self smart")
- Naturalist Intelligence ("nature smart")

### Vygotsky

Breaking the cycle of school failure that is chronic among some students who enter Whetstone Academy begins only when they your son begins to feel successful in school. School success is an alien concept to many of our young men; therefore, school success must be a foundational component of the curriculum. Emotional tension, aggressiveness, and anxious behavior often disappear when success-building techniques are used and the student begins to achieve in school.

Multiple opportunities should be structured for student success at levels that are challenging but appropriate. For students to believe they can effect changes in their behavior, they must have opportunities to connect their behaviors with positive outcomes.

#### Lev Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development

Vygotsky was a Soviet psychologist (1896-1934) who is only now beginning to have a major impact in the West. His major work was in the areas of language and thought. We believe that his findings about learners' Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) are a very practical and effective way to ensure student

success. Here is how we apply the ZPD to students at Whetstone Academy: First, we pretest students. Then we begin instruction at their intellectual and emotional levels, and adjust that instruction to stay within the ZPD. When planning lessons, we avoid teaching below their ability level (boredom) and avoid teaching above their frustration level (failure). By doing so, we establish a “zone” from which to plan instruction. Staying within that zone allows the students to feel challenged and experience success at the same time.

Each person’s “zone” is not a fixed entity. As students gain confidence both academically and emotionally, the ZPD moves higher. (In the same respect, if a person has emotional and academic setbacks, the “zone” can also move to a lower level.)

**Grading and Evaluation:** The Academy uses a standard grading scale and computes grade point average using a 4.0 system for 9<sup>th</sup> grade. Grades follow these guidelines:

- A: 4.0 90-100% Mastery of Subject Area
- B: 3.0 80-89% Good Quality Knowledge of Subject Area
- C: 2.0 70-79% Work of Average Quality-Tutorial Help Recommended
- D: 1.0 60-69% Work of Minimum Quality-Tutorial Help Required
- F: 0.0 Below 60% Specialized Tutorial Help Required

**Methods for evaluation of student work include, but are not limited to the following:**

- Daily Work and Class/Group Participation & Contribution
- Completion of Required and Optional Assignments & Projects
- Quiz and Test Scores
- Peer Editing & Critique Work
- Teacher Interpretation & Evaluation
- Oral and Written Communication & Expression

## **Experiential Learning:**

Experiential Learning Theory (ELT) seeks to pass on the legacy of those twentieth century scholars – notably William James, John Dewey, Kurt Lewin, Jean Piaget, Lev Vygotsky, Carl Jung, Paulo Freire, Carl Rogers, and others – who placed experience at the center of the learning process, envisioning an educational system that was learner centered. ELT is a dynamic view of learning based on a learning cycle driven by the resolution of the dual dialectics of action/reflection and experience/abstraction. It is a holistic theory that defines learning as the major process of human adaptation involving the whole person.

The key elements of experiential learning:

- The learner must be willing to be actively involved in the experience;
- The learner must be able to reflect on the experience;
- The learner must possess and use analytical skills to conceptualize the experience; and
- The learner must possess decision-making and problem solving skills in order to use the new ideas gained from the experience.

At Whetstone Academy, each Friday is an experiential learning day where students experience what they have learned by having a hands-on experience or field trip.

## STEAM

Whetstone Academy is proud to offer a STEAM program. STEAM is a curriculum based on the idea of educating students in four specific disciplines — science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics — in an interdisciplinary and applied approach. Rather than teach the four disciplines as separate and discrete subjects, STEAM integrates them into a cohesive learning paradigm based on real-world applications. Students entering the world need relevant and applicable experiences in STEAM to be successful in high school, college, and beyond. Our licensed STEAM teacher provides meaningful hands-on experiences for our young men.

## Farm – based Learning

Whetstone Academy defines farm-based learning as the broad set of teaching/learning strategies that enable young men to learn from any segment of our farm, including projects, animal care, and gardening. Our definition provides for learners to identify what they wish to learn and opens up an unlimited set of resources to support them. Principles of farm-based learning relate to nature, gardening and animal care, emphasizing the changing farm, the interactive learner, the learning processes, and sources for learning.

### Concepts:

- Organic Farming
- Farm-to-Table
- Sustainable agriculture
- Animal care
- Building Projects

### Principles:

- Farm-based Education must be viewed as a continuum from introduction to mastery.

- Learning is what we do for ourselves. It therefore requires the full involvement of the learner as well as the teacher.
- Jobs in the future will require not only more education, but also a different type of education that includes critical thinking, teamwork, and the ability to apply knowledge.
- Problems affecting our learners today are much broader than schools alone can solve; thus, we use our farm-based curriculum to supplement the classroom experience.

**Whetstone Academy provides the following Community-based Learning Activities:**

- Community Service Projects
- Visiting Local Community Theaters
- Visiting Local Art Galleries
- Incorporating successful guest speakers into the curriculum

## Academic Curriculum

**A Traditional College Preparatory Curriculum** - The Academy offers a solid grounding in English, Mathematics, Social Studies, and Science based on the South Carolina Standard Course of Study, Common Core and empirical curriculum.

<b>Whetstone Academy Curriculum Plan</b>		
<i>May vary from student to student based on ability and/or individual needs.</i>		
<b>All curriculums are based on the South Carolina Standard Course of Study, Common Core and empirical curriculum knowledge.</b>		
5 <sup>th</sup> - 6 <sup>th</sup> Grade	7 <sup>th</sup> Grade	8 <sup>th</sup> /9 <sup>th</sup> Grade
Language Arts: Integrated Literature Grammar/Writing & Composition	Language Arts: Integrated Literature/Journalism Grammar/Writing Composition	Language Arts: Integrated Literature Grammar/Writing composition
	&	&

Math: Grade Level Coursework	Math: Grade Level Coursework	Math: Grade Level or Individualized Coursework
Science: Earth Science - Astronomy Life Science - Ecosystems & Endangered Species	Science: Life Science- Plants and Animals Earth Science – Weather and Geology	Science: Life Science - Body Systems/ Nutrition Physical Science, Biology
Social Studies: Western Civilization – Map Unit, Ancient Greece, Ancient Rome and Middle Ages	Social Studies: World History	Social Studies - American History (1800’s & 1900’s) Civics
<b>Grade 10 curriculum is developed based on student needs and requirements of the next school.</b>		

## Miscellaneous

### *Special Education Services*

Whetstone Academy employs a Learning Support Director that creates individualized learning plans and conducts special education meetings as required by local school districts of our students.

### *Parent Communication -- Quarterly Reports and Conferences*

***Whetstone teachers generate the following reports for parents every nine weeks:***

- Report Card Grades
- Course comments on each student
- Teachers will host parent conference prior to every Parent Workshop. Parents are encouraged to call or email the Academic Director if they have any questions or concerns about their child’s performance.

### Pre and End of Stay Testing

We administer *Let’s Go Learn* to all students upon admission and prior to graduation. In addition, we may recommend that a small number of students will take the individually administered Woodcock-Johnson.

## Course Descriptions

### English/Language Arts:

#### **6<sup>th</sup> Language Arts:**

Sixth grade students will use oral language, written language, media and technology for expressive informational, argumentative, critical, and literary purposes. Students will explore structure of language, study and practice grammatical rules, in order to speak and write effectively. The emphasis is placed on personal expression in order for the student to:

- Interpret and synthesize information.
- Develop an understanding of foundations of argument.
- Critically analyze print and non-print communication.
- Use effective sentence construction and edit improvements in sentence formation, usage, mechanics, and spelling.
- Interpret and evaluate a range of literature focused on themes of adventure and relationships.
- Create, explore, and perform student created pieces of literature

Text: 6th-McGraw Hill, Treasures 6<sup>th</sup> grade  
Also, Various novels and non-fiction literature

### **7<sup>th</sup> Grade Language Arts:**

Seventh grade students will use oral language, written language, media and technology for expressive informational, argumentative, critical, and literary purposes. Students will explore structure of language, study and practice grammatical rules, in order to speak and write effectively. The emphasis is placed on personal expression in order for the student to:

- Express perspectives in response to personal, social, cultural, and historical issues.
- Interpret and synthesize information
- Critically analyze print and non-print communication.
- Use effective sentence construction and edit for improvements in sentence formation, usage, mechanics and spelling.
- Interpret and evaluate a range of literature focused on themes of adventure and relationships.
- Create, explore, and perform student created pieces of literature

Text: Prentice Hall, Literature 7th Grade  
Also, Various novels and non-fiction literature

### **8<sup>th</sup> Grade Language Arts:**

Eighth grade students will use oral language, written language, media and technology for expressive informational, argumentative, critical, and literary purposes. Students will explore structure of language, study grammatical rules, in order to speak and write effectively. In Eighth grade the emphasis is placed on using information for specific task. The student will also:

- Express perspectives in response to personal, social, cultural, and historical issues.
- Refine understanding and use of argument and present in a group
- Critically analyze print and non-print communication.
- Construct effective sentence and edit for improvements in sentence formation, usage, mechanics and spelling.
- Interpret and evaluate a range of literature focused on themes of adventure and relationships.
- Create, explore, and perform student created pieces of literature.

Text: McDougal Littell, Language of Literature 8th Grade  
Also, Various novels and non-fiction literature

### **9<sup>th</sup> Grade English I:**

Students explore the ways that audience, purpose, and context shape oral communication, written communication, and media technology. While emphasis is placed on communicating for purposes of personal expression, students also engage in meaningful communication for expressive, expository, argumentative, and literary purposes. In English 1 students will also:

- Express reflections and reactions to literature and personal experience.
- Explain meaning, describe processes, and answer research questions.
- Evaluate communication and critique texts.
- Make and support an informed opinion.
- Participate in conversations about and written analysis of literary genres, elements, and traditions.
- Use knowledge of language and standard grammatical conventions.
- Create, explore, and perform student created pieces of literature.

Text: The Language of Literature - 9<sup>th</sup> Grade, Bridges to Literature – 9<sup>th</sup> Grade,  
McDougal Littell & Glencoe Writers Choice, 9<sup>th</sup> Grade  
Also, Various novels and non-fiction literature

### **Handwriting:**

Whetstone Academy evaluates each child's handwriting upon admissions to the school. If a child's handwriting is significantly below grade level; we will begin our handwriting curriculum. We believe that



good old-fashioned penmanship is very brain friendly with an inherent capacity to train the brain. Good handwriting helps “hard wire” the brain, promoting brain growth and influencing literacy in the process. Whetstone Academy does not neglect the fact that handwriting has a deep impact on a child’s performance in school; thus, in many instances assistive technology must be utilized.

## **Math:**

Middle School mathematics students expand on their skills to compute with all real numbers and are challenged to apply their prior knowledge and experience in new and more difficult situations. The content in middle school mathematics highlights rational numbers and algebraic thinking. Students will learn to develop fluency in solving multi-step equations and model linear functions.

### **Sixth Grade Math:**

In sixth grade the student will focus on the following major concepts and skills by understanding and applying these concepts through number and operations, measurement, geometry, data analysis and probability, as well as Algebra.

- Negative rational numbers
- Percent
- Transformations in the coordinate plane
- Probability
- Equations and inequalities
- Multiplication and division of non-negative rational numbers
- Solve relevant and authentic problems using appropriate technology and apply these concepts as well as those developed in earlier years.

Text: Houghton Mifflin, Math Grade 6

### **Seventh Grade Math:**

In seventh grade the student will focus on the following major concepts and skills by understanding and applying these concepts through number and operations, measurement, geometry, data analysis and probability, as well as Algebra.

- Computations with rational numbers
- Ratio and proportion
- Factors and multiple
- Volume and surface area
- Measures of central tendency
- Box plots and histograms
- Equations and inequalities
- Students will solve relevant and authentic problems using appropriate technology and apply these concepts as well as those developed in earlier years.

Text: Holt, Middle School Math Course 2

### **Pre-Algebra/8<sup>th</sup> Grade:**

The Pre-Algebra curriculum is designed to provide students a survey of preparatory topics for high school mathematics, including the foundations for high school algebra and geometry. Appropriate technology, from manipulatives to calculators, and application software will be used regularly for instruction and assessment. The following concepts will be further developed and strengthened:

- Numbers and Operations
- Geometry
- Measurement
- Data Analysis
- Probability
- Algebra

Text: Holt, Pre-Algebra

### **Algebra I:**

Algebra 1 continues the study of algebraic concepts. It includes operations with polynomials and matrices, creation and application of linear functions and relations, algebraic representations of geometric relationships, and an introduction to nonlinear functions. Students will be expected to describe and translate among graphic, algebraic, numeric, tabular, and verbal representations of relations and use those representations to solve problems. Appropriate technology, from manipulatives to calculators and application software will be used regularly for instruction and assessment. The following concepts will be further developed and strengthened:

- Numbers and Operations
- Geometry
- Measurement
- Data Analysis
- Probability
- Algebra

Text: Holt, Algebra I: Concepts and Skills

## **Science:**

### **Science-6<sup>th</sup> Grade:**

Learners will study natural and technological systems. All goals will focus on the unifying concepts of science defined by the *National Science Education Standards*: Systems, Order, and Organizations; Evidence, Models, and Explanations; Constancy, Change, and Measurement; Evolution and Equilibrium; and Function. The skills of inquiry and technological design are targeted for mastery. The concepts for which in-depth studies will be designed include: Scientific Inquiry, Technological Design, Lithosphere, Cycling of Matter, Solar System, Energy Transfer/Transformation, and Population Dynamics.

Text: Harcourt, Science Grade 6

### **Science-7<sup>th</sup> Grade:**

Learners will study natural and technological systems. All goals will focus on the unifying concepts of science defined by the *National Science Education Standards*: Systems, Order, and Organization; Evidence, Models, and Explanation; Constancy, Change, and Measurement; Evolution and Equilibrium; and Form and function. The skills of inquiry and technological design are targets for mastery. The concepts for which in-depth studies will be designed are: Scientific Inquiry, Technological Design, Atmosphere, Human Body Systems, Genetics and Heredity, and Motion and Forces.

Text: Glencoe Science, Green Level

### **Science-8<sup>th</sup> Grade:**

Learners will study natural and technological systems. All goals should focus on the unifying concepts of science defined by the *National Science Education Standards*: Systems, Order, and Organization; Evidence, Models, and Explanation; Constancy, Change, and Measurement; Evolution and Equilibrium; and Form and function. The skills of inquiry and technological design are targets for mastery. The concepts for which in-depth studies will be designed are: Scientific Inquiry, Technological Design, Hydrosphere, Chemistry, Evolution Theory and Cellular Biology.

Text: Glencoe Science, Earth Science: Geology, the Environment, and the Universe

### **Physical Science:**

The Physical Science curriculum is designed to continue the investigation of the physical sciences begun in earlier grades. The Physical Science course will build a rich knowledge base to provide a foundation for the continued study of science at the high school level. The investigations will be approached in a qualitative

and quantitative manner in keeping with the developing mathematical skills of the students. The curriculum will integrate the following topics from both chemistry and physics:

- Structure of atoms
- Structure and properties of matter
- Motion and forces
- Conservation of energy, matter and charge

Text: Physical Science, Glencoe

### **Biology:**

The biology curriculum is designed to continue student investigations and deepen student understanding of the biological sciences. The high school instruction expands biology to a more conceptual level. In-depth study of the following concepts is included:

- The cell
- The molecular basis for heredity
- Biological evolution
- The interdependence of organisms
- Matter
- Energy
- Organization in living systems

Text: Prentice Hall, Biology

### **Health:**

A comprehensive Healthful Living Education program for all students has as its foundation learning experiences, which are designed to help each individual to help each individual develop pro-active healthy behaviors. Students will engage in physical activities that provide for challenge, problem-solving, and decision-making skills. They will also employ appropriate social interaction with peers.

Text: Teen Health, Glencoe

## **Social Studies:**

### **Social Studies – 6<sup>th</sup> Grade**

The students will focus on the continued development of knowledge and skills acquired in the fourth and fifth grade studies of the United States by considering, comparing, and connecting those studies to the study of South America and Europe, including Russia. As students examine social, economic, and political institutions they analyze similarities and differences among societies. While concepts are drawn from history and the social sciences, the primary discipline is geography, especially cultural geography. This focus provides students with a framework for studying local, regional, national, and global issues that concern them, for understanding the interdependence of the world in which they live, and for making informed judgments as active citizens.

Text: McDougal Littell, World History

### **Social Studies-7<sup>th</sup> Grade:**

Seventh grade social studies builds on the continued development of knowledge and skills acquired in fourth, fifth and sixth grade by considering, comparing and connecting previous skills to the study of Asia, Africa and Australia. The student will examine social, economic, and political institutions and analyze similarities and difference among societies. The primary discipline is geography, especially through the study of cultural geography. Through this focus the student will explore the local, regional, national and global issues that concern them. This will provide the student with the opportunity to develop an understanding the interdependence of the world in which they live and for making informed judgments as active citizens.

Text: McDougal Littell, World Cultures and Geography

### **Social Studies-8<sup>th</sup> Grade:**

The eighth grade student will examine roles of people, events, and issues and the historical contributions that affect the unique characteristics of different areas of the world. Key concepts of geography, civics, and economics are incorporated throughout the course to gain a fuller understanding of how people, events and issues significantly influence the development of the characteristics of a place. The eighth grade learner will explore:

- Geographic Relationships
- Historic Perspectives
- Economics and Development
- Government and active citizenship
- Global Connections
- Technological Influences and Society
- Individual Identity and Development
- Cultures and Diversity

Text: McDougal Littell, American History: Beginnings through Reconstruction

### **Civics and Economics:**

Students will acquire the skills and knowledge necessary to become responsible citizens in an interdependent world. Students will need a practical understanding of these systems of civics and economics that affect their lives as consumers and citizens. As informed decisions-makers, students will apply acquired knowledge to real life experiences. When studying the legal and political systems, students will become aware of their rights and responsibilities and put this information into practice. With a balanced presentation of the economic, legal, and political systems; this course lends itself to an interdisciplinary teaching approach. The goals and objectives are drawn from disciplines of political science, history, economics, geography, and jurisprudence.

Text: Holt, Civics in Practice: Principles of Government and Economics

### **World History:**

This is a survey course that gives students the opportunity to explore recurring themes of human experience common to civilizations around the globe from ancient to contemporary times. The application of the themes of geography and an analysis of the cultural traits of civilizations will help students understand how people shape their world and how their world shapes them. As students examine the historical roots of significant events, ideas, movements, and phenomena, they encounter the contributions and patterns of living in civilizations around the world. Students broaden their historical perspectives as they explore ways societies have dealt with continuity and change, exemplified by issues such war and peace, internal stability and strife, and the development of institutions. By acquiring knowledge of civilizations, which have shaped the development of the United States, students become better-informed citizens.

## **Other Curriculum Areas:**

### **Study Skills:**

The study skills curriculum will be taught as a class and incorporated into each subject and is designed to help students become better learners. The curriculum will continually focus on the important area of schoolwork, including vocabulary building, studying and doing homework, writing research papers, taking tests, and more. The following 7 Keys to Success will also be addressed:

- Get ready to study now
- Get organized
- Make the most of class time
- Make the most of home study time
- Make the most of homework
- Put the computer to good use

- Go the extra mile

The SSAT Test Prep Curriculum is also used to teach test taking skills in Language and Math.

**Expressive Arts:**

The Expressive Arts curriculum at Whetstone Academy seeks to explore visual arts concepts and processes, while addressing the National Content Standards for visual arts. This therapeutic approach directs a student's experience and understanding of art in a variety of ways, which encompass observing art, thinking and talking about art, and creating art – ultimately expressing one's emotions through artistic expression.

**Physical Education:**

The overall purpose of the physical education curriculum is to develop in each student an understanding of the relationship of good body function and exercise; to motivate each student to develop physical fitness, to foster good social and emotional adjustment; to enable students to discover and develop their individual talents through physical development.

Boys will participate in physical activity at least five days per week. We offer both intramural sports, along with a wide variety of wilderness-based recreational activities throughout the school week and on weekends.

Whetstone Academy physical education activities include: soccer, basketball, swimming, softball, rock climbing, hiking, canoeing, and more!

**Yoga and Mindfulness:**

*Relaxation and Mindfulness are incorporated in the mornings to help students start the day successfully.*

The word yoga means "union" in Sanskrit, the language of ancient India where yoga originated. We can think of the union occurring between mind, body and spirit. What is commonly referred to as "yoga" can be more accurately described by the Sanskrit word asana, which refers to the practice of physical postures or poses. Asana is only one of the eight types of yoga, the majority of which are more concerned with mental and spiritual well being than physical activity. Today, however, the words asana and yoga have become almost synonymous. Many people think that yoga is stretching. But while stretching is certainly involved, yoga is really about creating balance in the body through developing both strength and flexibility. More importantly, yoga reduces stress in the body.

**Note: All curriculums can be modified for each individual learner to meet their academic needs.**